CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Buying, Having, and Being • 13E



MICHAEL R. SOLOMON

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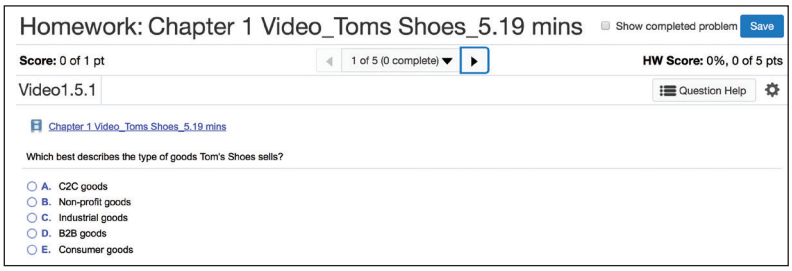
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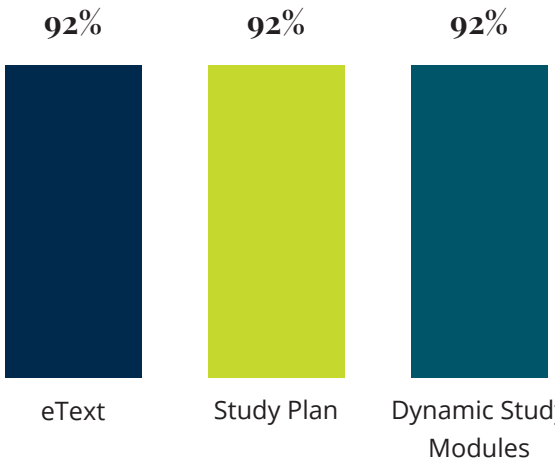


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Consumer Behavior

Buying, Having, and Being

Thirteenth Edition

Michael R. Solomon
Saint Joseph's University

Pearson

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PREFACE

For many years, this course was called Buyer Behavior rather than Consumer Behavior. What's in a name? In this case, a lot—the word "buyer" reflected a singular focus on buyer/seller transactions. This book played a significant role in broadening that focus to the larger sphere of consumption. That includes what happens before, during, and after the point of purchase. Hence the suffix that defines the title: *Buying, Having, and Being.*

The book also was the first to provide a much more interdisciplinary and comprehensive look at the discipline. It continues to incorporate a variety of social science perspectives. Students appreciate the broader context and the emphasis on cultural dynamics that influence (often in unseen ways) the consumption experiences they have every day. It reflects my strong endorsement of the social psychologist Kurt Lewin's maxim: "There is nothing as practical as a good theory." If you don't believe it, that saying is even in my email signature (email me at msolom01@sju.edu and I'll prove it to you).

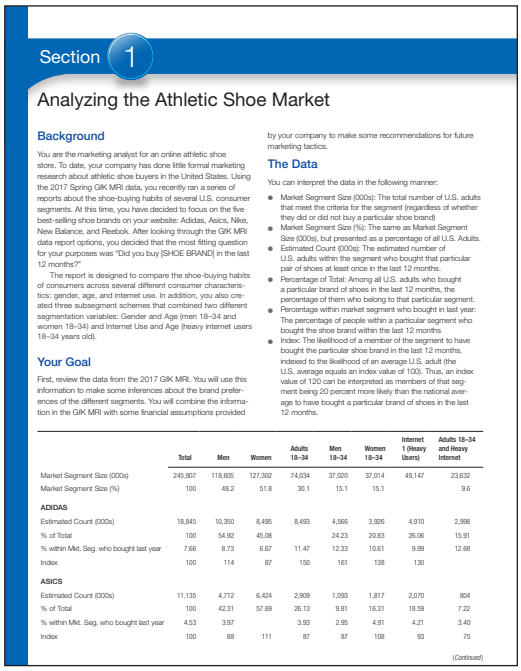
The book marries a strong theoretical and empirical foundation with the practical applications of these insights to the everyday practice of marketing. Thoughtful discussion and applications questions at the end of each chapter also encourage students to integrate what they have learned with what is going on around them in the real world.

But here's the important question: "How is this book different from other Consumer Behavior texts?" Let me count the ways . . .

What's New and Notable in This Edition

1. **It includes a mix of academic and industry research to show students that "there's nothing as practical as a good theory."** Academics understand the value of a rigorous theoretical framework and that many of the fleeting "fads" we observe in consumer behavior actually reflect underlying and stable internal and external phenomena. Yesterday's "Mouseketeers" are today's Beyhive (Beyoncé's devoted fan club). The book cites hundreds of academic articles. In addition, MyLab Marketing offers brief essays on consumer behavior research by professors who relate the work they do to chapter topics. There are 38 of these "CB As I See It" contributions, including 11 that are new to this edition.

   As valuable as I believe academic research to be (and I've published my share of it), I believe it's vital to complement this work with industry data. Thus you'll find a large number of studies that companies and survey firms have conducted to support the academic data. This edition also includes updated end-of-section assignments with data provided by GfK, one of the world's largest marketing research firms. These allow students to "get their hands dirty" by actually working with real information that they can manipulate and use to do a deep dive into real world problems.



Section 1

Analyzing the Athletic Shoe Market

Background

You are the marketing analyst for an online athletic shoe store. To date, your company has done little formal marketing research about athletic shoe buyers in the United States. Using the 2017 Spring GfK MRI data, you recently ran a series of reports about the shoe-buying habits of several U.S. consumer segments. At this time, you have decided to focus on the five best-selling shoe brands on your website: Adidas, Asics, Nike, New Balance, and Reebok. After looking through the GfK MRI data report options, you decided that the most fitting question for your purposes was "Did you buy [SHOE BRAND] in the last 12 months?"

The report is designed to compare the shoe-buying habits of consumers across several different consumer characteristics: gender, age, and internet use. In addition, you also created three subsegment schemes that combined two different segmentation variables: Gender and Age (men 18–34 and women 18–34) and Internet Use and Age (heavy internet users 18–34 years old).

Your Goal

First, review the data from the 2017 GfK MRI. You will use this information to make some inferences about the brand preferences of the different segments. You will combine the information in the GfK MRI with some financial assumptions provided by your company to make some recommendations for future marketing tactics.

The Data

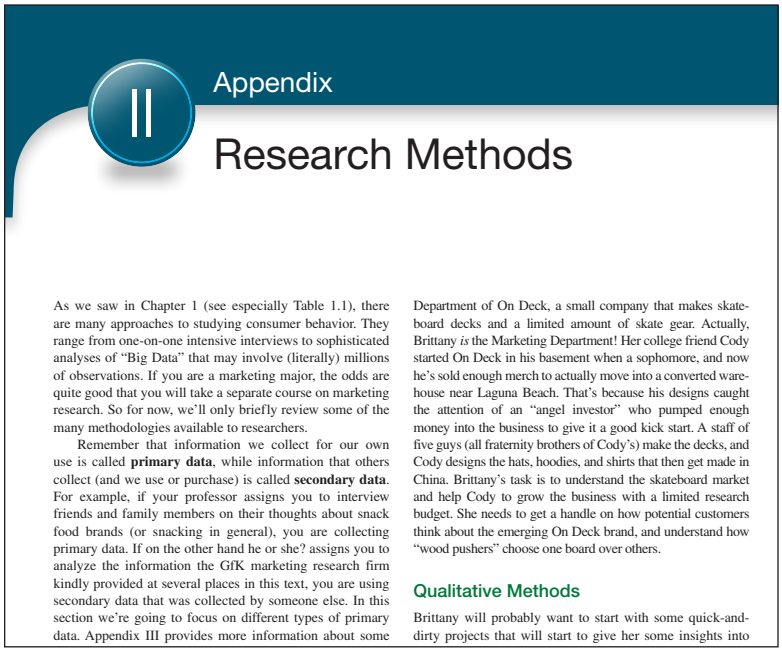
You can interpret the data in the following manner:

- Market Segment Size (000s): The total number of U.S. adults that meet the criteria for the segment (regardless of whether they did or did not buy a particular shoe brand)
- Market Segment Size (%): The same as Market Segment Size (000s), but presented as a percentage of all U.S. Adults.
- Estimated Count (000s): The estimated number of U.S. adults within the segment who bought that particular pair of shoes at least once in the last 12 months.
- Percentage of Total: Among all U.S. adults who bought a particular brand of shoes in the last 12 months, the percentage of them who belong to that particular segment.
- Percentage within market segment who bought in last year: The percentage of people within a particular segment who bought the shoe brand within the last 12 months
- Index: The likelihood of a member of the segment to have bought the particular shoe brand in the last 12 months, indexed to the likelihood of an average U.S. adult (the U.S. average equals an index value of 100). Thus, an index value of 120 can be interpreted as members of that segment being 20 percent more likely than the national average to have bought a particular brand of shoes in the last 12 months.

	Total	Men	Women	Adults 18–34	Men 18–34	Women 18–34	Internet 1 (Heavy Users)	Adults 18–34 and Heavy Internet
Market Segment Size (000s)	245,907	118,605	127,302	74,034	37,020	37,014	49,147	23,632
Market Segment Size (%)	100	48.2	51.8	30.1	15.1	15.1		9.6
ADIDAS								
Estimated Count (000s)	18,845	10,350	8,495	8,493	4,566	3,926	4,910	2,998
% of Total	100	54.92	45.08		24.23	20.83	26.06	15.91
% within Mkt. Seg. who bought last year	7.66	8.73	6.67	11.47	12.33	10.61	9.99	12.68
Index	100	114	87	150	161	138	130	
ASICS								
Estimated Count (000s)	11,135	4,712	6,424	2,909	1,093	1,817	2,070	804
% of Total	100	42.31	57.69	26.13	9.81	16.31	18.59	7.22
% within Mkt. Seg. who bought last year	4.53	3.97		3.93	2.95	4.91	4.21	3.40
Index	100	88	111	87	87	108	93	75

(Continued)

Hey, I get the need to marry theory and data. As a regular contributor to *Forbes.com*, I'm challenged each and every week to identify important developments in today's fast-moving business world and explain to thousands of readers why these relate to what we know about consumer behavior.



Appendix II

Research Methods

As we saw in Chapter 1 (see especially Table 1.1), there are many approaches to studying consumer behavior. They range from one-on-one intensive interviews to sophisticated analyses of "Big Data" that may involve (literally) millions of observations. If you are a marketing major, the odds are quite good that you will take a separate course on marketing research. So for now, we'll only briefly review some of the many methodologies available to researchers.

Remember that information we collect for our own use is called **primary data**, while information that others collect (and we use or purchase) is called **secondary data**. For example, if your professor assigns you to interview friends and family members on their thoughts about snack food brands (or snacking in general), you are collecting primary data. If on the other hand he or she? assigns you to analyze the information the GfK marketing research firm kindly provided at several places in this text, you are using secondary data that was collected by someone else. In this section we're going to focus on different types of primary data. Appendix III provides more information about some

Department of On Deck, a small company that makes skateboard decks and a limited amount of skate gear. Actually, Brittany *is* the Marketing Department! Her college friend Cody started On Deck in his basement when a sophomore, and now he's sold enough merch to actually move into a converted warehouse near Laguna Beach. That's because his designs caught the attention of an "angel investor" who pumped enough money into the business to give it a good kick start. A staff of five guys (all fraternity brothers of Cody's) make the decks, and Cody designs the hats, hoodies, and shirts that then get made in China. Brittany's task is to understand the skateboard market and help Cody to grow the business with a limited research budget. She needs to get a handle on how potential customers think about the emerging On Deck brand, and understand how "wood pushers" choose one board over others.

Qualitative Methods

Brittany will probably want to start with some quick-and-dirty projects that will start to give her some insights into

And last but not least, you'll find a new **Appendix on Research Methods to Study Consumer Behavior**. This section summarizes an array of methodologies to help students understand that there is more than one way to approach a challenging problem. The Appendix shows how a marketer with a specific problem might employ each technique to better understand his or her customers.

2. **It expands its prior focus on "participatory marketing."** In my opinion the single biggest transformation in consumer behavior today is the extent to which everyday people actually participate to create and promote the products and services they use as we all become absorbed into the "Internet of Things." This added coverage starts in Chapter 1, where I have added a new section on this topic. The book emphasizes the positive aspects (e.g., co-creation) and the not-so-positive aspects (e.g., chipping, biohacking) of this revolution. As always, I apply a somewhat critical eye to new developments and take care to highlight the huge ethical quandaries some of these "advances" pose to our civilization in addition to the exciting opportunities they create for marketers who are savvy enough to jump on them. Quite frankly, I just haven't seen competing titles that begin to capture many of the amazing disruptions we're witnessing in the real world.

3. **It's up-to-date and relevant to students' lives.** *I actually teach this course every semester*, so I know firsthand that we are all challenged to show students why these important concepts are so relevant to them NOW and tomorrow. To them, an example from, say, 2013, should pop up in a course on Ancient History.

   We need to wake up these students! I strive to write the book in a conversational tone and to minimize jargon. And, you'll find some humor thrown in that I don't believe other books offer (of course, everyone's definition of humor is subjective, but at least I get a kick out of some of it). There is also an Appendix on **Careers in Consumer Behavior** that shows students how they can actually land a job in this fascinating discipline.

   You deserve teaching materials that meet your own high standards for your course. That's why we partner with highly respected authors to develop interactive content and course-specific resources that you can trust—and that keep your students engaged. With the 13th edition of Consumer Behavior, we've added brand new assignments to the MyLab.

New **Mini Sims developed for the Consumer Behavior course** put students in professional roles and give them the opportunity to apply course concepts and develop decision-making skills through real-world business challenges.

The simulations use each student's decisions to create various scenario paths that help them understand the impact their decisions can have on an organization.

New **Dynamic Study Modules** use the latest developments in cognitive science and help students study chapter topics by adapting to their performance in real time.

New **CB As I See It sections** in MyLab Marketing feature prominent consumer behavior researchers who share their current work with students. These short essays are accompanied by open-ended discussion questions to get students thinking about how the research relates to what they've just learned in the chapter.



Wait, I haven't convinced you that the book's contents are current? Here's a partial list of new key terms I have included in the 13th edition:

Internet of Things
Robot Companions
Machine Learning
M2M (machine to machine communication)
Autonomous vehicles
AI (Artificial intelligence)
Mindfulness
Cellphone Zombie
Emoji
The Google Effect
Subscription Boxes
Biohackers
Thinspiration
Gender Binarism
Brand Resonance
Buyer Personas
Decluttering
Minimalism
Paid Influencer Programs
Fake News
Astroturfing
Ethnocentrism
Social scoring
Authenticity
Agile Marketing
Scrum
Blockchain
Content marketing
Sneakerheads

Instructor Teaching Resource

This edition's program comes with the following teaching resources.

Supplements available to instructors at www.pearsonhighered.com	Features of the Supplement
Instructor's Manual authored by Kate Pounders from The University of Texas at Austin	• Chapter-by-chapter summaries • Examples and activities not in the main book • Teaching outlines • Teaching tips • Solutions to all questions and problems in the book
Test Bank authored by John Capela from St. Joseph's College	4,000 multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer, and graphing questions with these annotations: • Difficulty level (1 for straight recall, 2 for some analysis, 3 for complex analysis) • Type (Multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer, essay) • Topic (The term or concept the question supports) • Learning outcome • AACSB learning standard (Written and Oral Communication; Ethical Understanding and Reasoning; Analytical Thinking; Information Technology; Interpersonal Relations and Teamwork; Diverse and Multicultural Work; Reflective Thinking; Application of Knowledge)
Computerized TestGen	TestGen allows instructors to: • Customize, save, and generate classroom tests • Edit, add, or delete questions from the Test Item Files • Analyze test results • Organize a database of tests and student results.
PowerPoints authored by Darci Wagner from Ohio University	Slides include all the graphs, tables, and equations in the textbook. PowerPoints meet accessibility standards for students with disabilities. Features include, but are not limited to: • Keyboard and Screen Reader access • Alternative text for images • High color contrast between background and foreground colors

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– Michael R. Solomon

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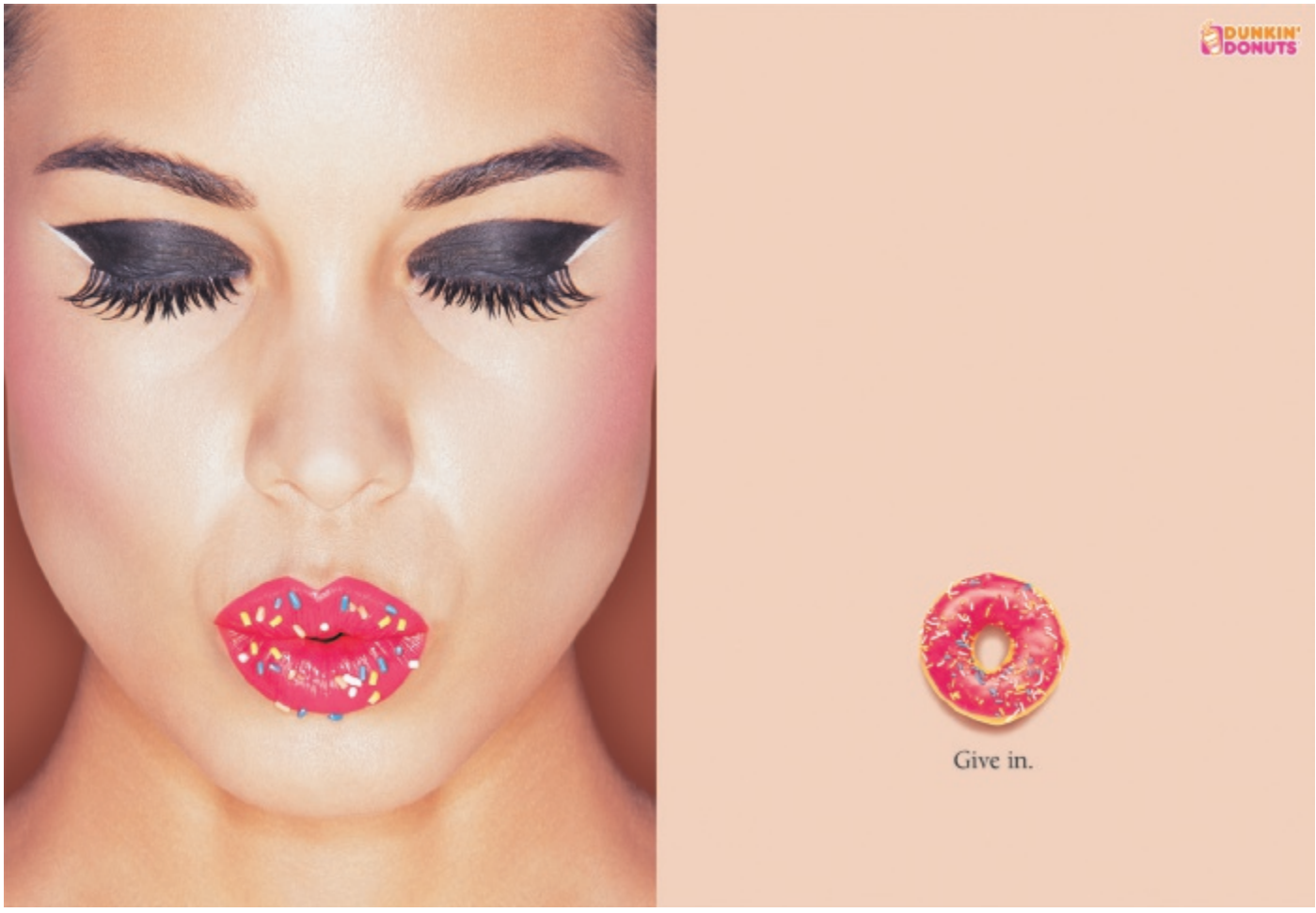


Michael R. Solomon, Ph.D., is Professor of Marketing in the Haub School of Business at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia. Before joining the Saint Joseph's faculty in the fall of 2006, he was the Human Sciences Professor of Consumer Behavior at Auburn University. Before moving to Auburn in 1995, he was chair of the Department of Marketing in the School of Business at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Professor Solomon began his academic career in the Graduate School of Business Administration at New York University (NYU), where he also served as Associate Director of NYU's Institute of Retail Management. He earned his B.A. degrees in psychology and sociology *magna cum laude* at Brandeis University and a Ph.D. in social psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In 1996 he was awarded the Fulbright/FLAD Chair in Market Globalization by the U.S. Fulbright Commission and the Government of Portugal, and he served as Distinguished Lecturer in Marketing at the Technical University of Lisbon. He held an appointment as Professor of Consumer Behaviour at the University of Manchester (United Kingdom) from 2007 to 2013.

Professor Solomon's primary research interests include consumer behavior and lifestyle issues; branding strategy; the symbolic aspects of products; the psychology of fashion, decoration, and image; services marketing; marketing in virtual worlds; and the development of visually oriented online research methodologies. He has published numerous articles on these and related topics in academic journals, and he has delivered invited lectures on these subjects in Europe, Australia, Asia, and Latin America. His research has been funded by the American Academy of Advertising, the American Marketing Association, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the International Council of Shopping Centers, and the U.S. Department of Commerce. He currently sits on the editorial or advisory boards of *The Journal of Consumer Behaviour, Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, Critical Studies in Fashion and Beauty,* and *Journal for Advancement of Marketing Education,* and he served an elected six-year term on the Board of Governors of the Academy of Marketing Science. Professor Solomon has been recognized as one of the 15 most widely cited scholars in the academic behavioral sciences/fashion literature, and as one of the 10 most productive scholars in the field of advertising and marketing communications.

Professor Solomon is a frequent contributor to mass media. His feature articles have appeared in such magazines as *Psychology Today, Gentleman's Quarterly,* and *Savvy*. He has been quoted in numerous national magazines and newspapers, including *Advertising Age, Adweek, Allure, Elle, Glamour, Mademoiselle, Mirabella, Newsweek,* the *New York Times, Self, Time, USA Today,* and the *Wall Street Journal*. He frequently appears on television and speaks on radio to comment on consumer behavior issues, including appearances on *The Today Show, Good Morning America, Inside Edition, Newsweek on the Air,* the *Entrepreneur Sales and Marketing Show,* CNBC, Channel One, the *Wall Street Journal* Radio Network, the WOR Radio Network, and National Public Radio. He acts as consultant to numerous companies on consumer behavior and marketing strategy issues and often speaks to business groups throughout the United States and overseas. In addition to this text, Professor Solomon is coauthor of the widely used textbook *Marketing: Real People, Real Choices.* He has three children, Amanda, Zachary, and Alexandra; a son-in-law, Orly; and three granddaughters, Rose, Evey, and Arya. He lives in Philadelphia with his wife Gail and their "other child," a pug named Kelbie Rae.

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DUNKIN' DONUTS
Give in.

Section 1

Foundations of Consumer Behavior

This introductory section provides an overview of the field of consumer behavior (CB). In Chapter 1, we look at how consumers influence the field of marketing and at how marketers influence us. We describe the discipline of consumer behavior and some of the different approaches to understanding what makes consumers tick. In Chapter 2, we'll look at the broad issue of well-being, at both the positive and negative ways the products we use affect us, and we'll also focus on the central role of ethics in marketing decisions.

Chapters Ahead



Chapter 1
Buying, Having, and Being: An Introduction to Consumer Behavior



Chapter 2
Consumer and Social Well-Being

1 Buying, Having, and Being: An Introduction to Consumer Behavior

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why:

- **1-1** Consumer behavior is a process.
- **1-2** Marketers have to understand the wants and needs of different consumer segments.
- **1-3** Our choices as consumers relate in powerful ways to the rest of our lives.
- **1-4** Our motivations to consume are complex and varied.
- **1-5** Technology and culture create a new "always-on" consumer.
- **1-6** Many types of specialists study consumer behavior.
- **1-7** There are differing perspectives regarding how and what we should understand about consumer behavior.



Source: arek_malang/Shutterstock.

Gail has some time to kill before her accounting class, so she pulls out her trusty iPhone to see what's going on in her social networks. Between studying for her accounting and marketing exams, she hasn't checked out anything interesting in days—even her Facebook friends around campus have been quiet. Enough of the serious stuff, she decides. It's time for some *really* educational surfing.

So, where to go first? Gail goes straight to Pinterest to see if anyone has pinned any new styles on her Shoe-aholic Board. Yes, definitely some new stuff to post for her sorority sisters. She flicks over to HerCampus ("a collegiette's guide to life[SM]") to get the latest 411 on *The Bachelor* TV show. She's just about to jump to Tobi to check out today's sales when her friend Courtney texts her to check out Kourtney Kardashian's new CZ initial necklace that's just been revealed on the Be Monogrammed jewelry blog.[1] With her PayPal account, it doesn't take Gail long to throw the necklace in the digital cart and order it—and to share a photo of her haul on Instagram. Just on a whim, Gail opens the Tinder app on her phone; yes, as usual plenty of guys who want to meet up if she "swipes right." Not happening with these dweebs—a flurry of left swipes and she's done.[2] As Gail glances at the clock, she realizes she'd better come back to the real world or she'll miss her exam. Okay, enough time for one quick post before she runs to catch the campus shuttle: Gail logs on to RateMyProfessors.com and writes a quick but glowing paragraph about how great her consumer behavior professor has been this semester . . . not to mention that awesome textbook they're using.[3]

OBJECTIVE 1-1
Consumer behavior is a process.

Consumer Behavior: People in the Marketplace

This book is about people like Gail—and *you*. It concerns the products and services we buy and use and the ways these fit into our lives. This introductory chapter describes some important aspects of the field of consumer behavior and some reasons why it's essential to understand how people interact with the marketing system. For now, though, let's return to one "typical" consumer: Gail, the business major. The preceding vignette allows us to highlight some aspects of consumer behavior that we will cover in the rest of the book.

Gail is a consumer; so let's compare her to other consumers. For some purposes, marketers find it useful to categorize her in terms of her age, gender, income, or occupation. These are descriptive characteristics of a population, or **demographics**. In other cases, marketers would rather know something about Gail's interests in clothing or music or the way she spends her leisure time. Knowledge of consumer characteristics plays an extremely important role in many marketing applications, such as when a manufacturer defines the market for a product or an advertising agency decides on the appropriate techniques to employ when it targets a certain group of consumers.

Gail's sorority sisters strongly influence her purchase decisions. The conversations we have with others transmit a lot of product information, as well as recommendations to use or avoid particular brands; this content often is more influential than what we see on television commercials, magazines, or billboards. The growth of the internet has created thousands of online **consumption communities**, where members share opinions and recommendations about anything from Barbie dolls to baseball fantasy league team lineups to iPhone apps. Gail forms bonds with fellow group members because they use the same products. There is also pressure on each group member to buy things that will meet with the group's approval. A consumer may pay a steep price in the form of group rejection or embarrassment when he or she doesn't conform to others' conceptions of what is good or bad, "in" or "out."

As members of a large society, such as in the United States, people share certain cultural values, or strongly held beliefs about the way the world should function. Members of subcultures, or smaller groups within the culture, also share values; these groups include Hispanics, teens, Midwesterners, and even hipsters who listen to The Lumineers, wear Band of Outsiders clothing, and eat sushi burritos.

Every day Gail comes into contact with information about many competing *brands*. Some don't capture her attention at all, whereas others are just a turnoff because they don't relate to "looks," people, or ideas with which she identifies. The use of **market segmentation strategies** means an organization targets its product, service, or idea only to specific groups of consumers rather than to everybody—even if it means that other consumers who don't belong to this target market aren't attracted to it. That's why they make chocolate and vanilla ice cream (and even candied bacon flavor!).

Brands often have clearly defined images, or "personalities," that advertising, packaging, branding, and other marketing elements help to shape. Even the choice of a favorite website is very much a *lifestyle* statement: It says a lot about a person's interests, as well as something about the type of person he or she would like to be. People often purchase a product because they like its image or because they feel its "personality" somehow corresponds to their own.

This is true even when they evaluate other people; after all, each of us is in a way a "brand" that others like or not—thus the popularity of dating apps such as Tinder that let people quickly choose among competing alternatives! Moreover, a consumer may believe that if he or she buys and uses the product or service, its desirable qualities will



Consumers form strong loyalties with their favorite brands or stores. If necessary, many are willing to camp out for a new product introduction, much like they would for scarce tickets at a big concert.
Source: Jeffrey Blackler/Alamy Stock Photo.

"magically" rub off on to him or her. When a product or service satisfies our specific needs or desires, we may reward it with many years of *brand loyalty*, which is a bond between product and consumer that is difficult for competitors to break.

The appearance, taste, texture, or smell of the item influences our evaluations of products. A good website helps people to feel, taste, and smell with their eyes. We may be swayed by the shape and color of a package on the store shelf, as well as by more subtle factors, such as the symbolism in a brand name, in an advertisement, or even in the choice of a cover model for a magazine. These judgments are affected by—and often reflect—how a society feels people should define themselves at that point in time. Many product meanings lurk below the surface of packaging and advertising; we'll discuss some of the methods marketers and social scientists use to discover or apply these meanings.

Like Gail, we shape our opinions and desires based on a mix of voices from around the world, which is becoming a much smaller place as a result of rapid advancements in communications and transportation systems. In today's global culture, consumers often prize products and services that "transport" them to different places and allow them to experience the diversity of other cultures—even if only to watch others brush their teeth on YouTube.

What Is Consumer Behavior?

The field of **consumer behavior** covers a lot of ground: *It is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires.* Consumers take many forms, ranging from a ten year old child who begs her mother for a smartphone to an executive in a large corporation who helps to decide on a multimillion-dollar computer system. The items we consume include anything from canned peas to a massage, democracy, Juicy jeans, Reggaeton music, or a celebrity like Taylor Swift. The needs and desires we satisfy range from hunger and thirst to love, status, and even spiritual fulfillment. Also, as we'll see throughout this text, people get passionate about a broad range of products. Whether it's vintage Air Jordans, that perfect yoga mat, or the latest

computer tablet, there's no shortage of brand fans who will do whatever it takes to find and buy what they crave.

Consumer Behavior Is a Process

In its early stages of development, researchers referred to the field as *buyer behavior*; this reflected the emphasis at that time (1960s and 1970s) on the interaction between consumers and producers at the time of purchase. Most marketers now recognize that consumer behavior is in fact an *ongoing process*, not merely what happens at the moment a consumer hands over money or a credit card and in turn receives some good or service.

The **exchange**, a transaction in which two or more organizations or people give and receive something of value, is an integral part of marketing.[4] Although *exchange theory* remains an important part of consumer behavior, the expanded view emphasizes the *entire* consumption process, which includes the issues that influence the consumer before, during, and after a purchase. Figure 1.1 illustrates some of the issues that we address during each stage of the consumption process.

A **consumer** is a person who identifies a need or desire, makes a purchase, and then disposes of the product during the three stages of the consumption process. In many cases, however, different people play a role in this sequence of events. The purchaser and user of a product might not be the same person, as when a parent picks out clothes for a teenager (and makes selections that can result in "fashion suicide" in the view of the teen). In other cases, another person may act as an *influencer* when he or she recommends certain products without actually buying or using them. A friend's grimace when you try on that new pair of pants may be more influential than anything your mother might say.

Finally, consumers may take the form of organizations or groups. One or several persons may select products that many will use, as when a purchasing agent orders a company's office supplies. In other organizational situations, a large group of people may make purchase decisions: for example, company accountants, designers,

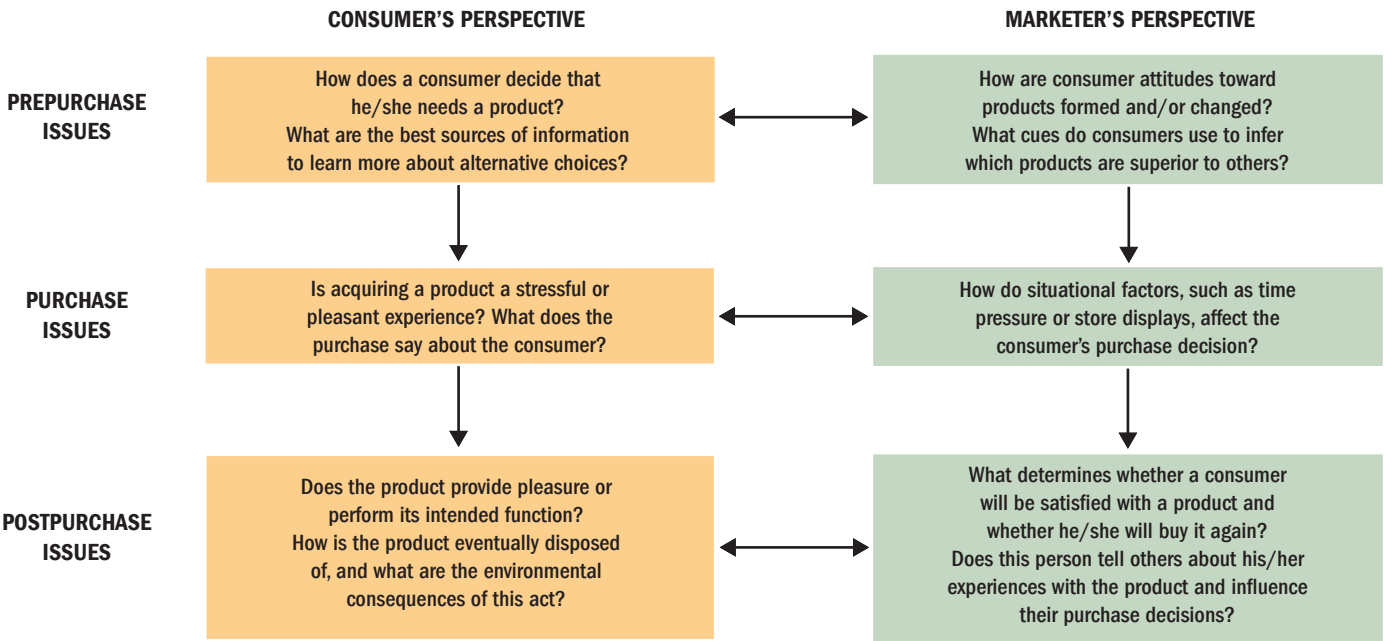


Figure 1.1 STAGES IN THE CONSUMPTION PROCESS

Marketing Opportunity

Successful companies understand that needs are a moving target. No organization—no matter how renowned for its marketing prowess—can afford to rest on its laurels. *Everyone* needs to keep innovating to stay ahead of changing customers and the marketplace. BMW is a great example. No one (not even rivals like Audi or Mercedes-Benz) would argue that the German automaker knows how to make a good car (although they may not agree with the company's claim to be "the ultimate driving machine"). Still, BMW's engineers and designers know they have to understand how drivers' needs will change in the future—even those loyal owners who love the cars they own today. The company is highly sensitive to such key trends as:

- A desire for environmentally friendly products
- Increasingly congested roadways and the movement by some cities such as London and New York to impose fees on vehicles in central areas
- New business models that encourage consumers to rent products only while they need them rather than buying them outright

BMW's response: The company committed more than $1 billion to develop electric BMWi models such as its new i3 commuter car and i8 sports car. These futuristic-looking vehicles are largely made from lightweight carbon fiber to maximize the distance they can go between battery charges, and 25 percent of the interior plastic comes from recycled or renewable raw materials. In addition, BMW started a car-sharing service (now in Portland, Seattle, and Brooklyn) it calls DriveNow: Drivers use a computer chip in their licenses to hire a car and leave it wherever they are when they no longer need it. That's forward thinking.[5]

engineers, sales personnel, and others—all of whom will have a say in the various stages of the consumption process. As we'll see in Chapter 11, one important type of organization is the family, in which different family members weigh in about products and services that all will use.

Consumers' Impact on Marketing Strategy

Why should managers, advertisers, and other marketing professionals bother to learn about consumer behavior? Simply, *it's good business*. The basic marketing concept that you (hopefully) remember from your basic marketing class states that organizations exist to satisfy needs. Marketers can satisfy these needs only to the extent that they understand the people or organizations that will use the products and services they sell. *Voila*! That's why we study consumer behavior.

OBJECTIVE 1-2
Marketers have to understand the wants and needs of different consumer segments.

Consumers Are Different! How We Divide Them Up

Our society is evolving from a *mass culture* in which many consumers share the same preferences to a diverse one in which we each have almost an infinite number of choices. We may have "fifty shades of grey," but just think about how many shades of lipstick or necktie patterns compete for your attention! This change makes it more important than ever to identify distinct market segments and to develop specialized messages and products for those groups.

As we'll see later, building loyalty to a brand is a smart marketing strategy, so sometimes companies define market segments when they identify their most faithful customers or **heavy users**. As a rule of thumb, marketers use the **80/20 Rule**: 20 percent of users account for 80 percent of sales. This guideline often holds up well, and in some cases even this lopsided split isn't big enough: A study of 54 million shoppers reported that only 2.5 percent of consumers account for 80 percent of sales for the average packaged-goods brand. The 1 percent of pet owners who buy 80 percent of Iams pet food spend $93 a year on the brand, and the 1.2 percent of beer drinkers who account for 80 percent of Budweiser sales spend $170 on Bud each year. Of the 1,364 brands the researchers studied, only 25 had a consumer base of more than 10 percent that accounted for 80 percent of volume.[6] So, just think of the 80/20 rule as a guideline rather than a strict proportion that's set in stone.

Aside from heavy usage of a product, we use many other dimensions to divide up a larger market. As we've already seen, *demographics* are statistics that measure observable aspects of a population, such as birth rate, age distribution, and income. The U.S. Census Bureau is a major source of demographic data on US families, but many private firms gather additional data on specific population groups as well. The changes and trends that demographic studies reveal are of great interest to marketers because they can use the data to locate and predict the size of markets for many products, ranging from home mortgages to brooms and can openers. Imagine trying to sell baby food to a single person or an around-the-world cruise to a couple making $15,000 a year!

In this text we explore many of the important demographic variables that make one consumer the same as or different from others. We also consider other important characteristics that are a bit subtler, such as differences in consumers' personalities and



BMW anticipates changes in consumer behavior as it develops electric car models like the i8 that satisfy dual desires for style and environmental responsibility.
Source: BMW of North America, LLC.

tastes that we can't objectively measure, yet may have a huge impact on our product choices. For now, let's summarize a few of the most important demographic dimensions, each of which we'll describe in more detail in later chapters.

Age

Consumers of different *age groups* obviously have different needs and wants. Although people who belong to the same age group differ in many other ways, they do tend to share a set of values and common cultural experiences that they carry throughout life.

The startup beauty brand Glossier had an eye on young women from day one. The company quickly built a loyal customer base entirely via **social media**. Employees talked directly to customers in a casual voice. The founder was a former style assistant at *Vogue* who started a beauty blog, then realized she was onto something. As she explains, "If I want to know how to do a black cat eye, I'm not going to drive to a department store. I'm going to go on YouTube, cross-check reviews of a product, and then maybe talk about it on Instagram. There wasn't a brand that encouraged me to take ownership of my routine—and understood that everyone is their own expert." At one point Glossier's eyebrow product had a 10,000 person waiting list—and you can bet not too many women over the age of 30 were on it.[8]

Gender

We start to make gender distinctions at an early age—even diapers come in pink versions for girls and blue for boys. Many products, from fragrances to footwear, target either men or women. These strategies often come from assumptions about what will appeal to each gender. For example, when microwaves first appeared in stores, they were sold alongside TVs and radios and marketed almost exclusively to men. Companies at the time assumed products like this would appeal only to men, so they made them in traditionally masculine colors (presumably men would want to "nuke" a quick snack while watching a game on TV). As a result, these products became known as "brown goods," while appliances for laundry and conventional cooking were largely made in white enamel and were called "white goods." Note: The microwaves gathered dust until marketers threw in the towel (pun intended) and moved them over to the side of stores that sold white goods. Sales soared after manufacturers realized female cooks might want to save time in the kitchen after all.[9]

Marketing Pitfall

When Hurricane Sandy devastated cities on the East Coast in 2012, some marketers rose to the occasion, whereas others stumbled in the wind. Gap, for example, tweeted, "We'll be doing lots of Gap.com shopping today. How about you?" American Apparel offered an incentive to shoppers: "In case you're bored during the storm, just enter SANDYSALE at checkout." Many of the storm victims were not amused. One tweeted, "Hey @ americanapparel people have died and others are in need. Shut up about your #Sandy sale."

In contrast, Allstate ran radio commercials to let policyholders know how to file claims quickly. JetBlue Airways waived change and cancellation fees for people who had to rebook. How's that for a relationship builder? Duracell batteries sent a truck to New York City with free batteries and access to charging lockers for mobile devices and computers to desperate people who had been without power (or even worse, access to social media).[7]

Family Structure

A person's family and marital status is yet another important demographic variable because this has a huge effect on consumers' spending priorities. Not surprisingly, young bachelors and newlyweds are the most likely to exercise; go to bars, concerts, and movies; and consume alcohol (enjoy it while you can!). Families with young children are big purchasers of health foods and fruit juices, whereas single-parent households and those with older children buy more junk food. Older couples and bachelors are most likely to use home maintenance services.[10]

Social Class and Income

People who belong to the same *social class* are approximately equal in terms of income and social standing in the community. They work in roughly similar occupations, and they tend to have similar tastes in music, clothing, leisure activities, and art. They also tend to socialize with one another, and they share many ideas and values regarding the way they should live.[11] The distribution of wealth is of great interest to marketers because it determines which groups have the greatest buying power and market potential.



The Redneck Bank takes a unique approach to social class segmentation (yes, this is a real bank).[12]
Source: Courtesy of www.redneckbank.com.

Race and Ethnicity

African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans are the three fastest-growing ethnic groups in the United States. As our society becomes increasingly multicultural, new opportunities develop to deliver specialized products to racial and ethnic groups and to introduce other groups to these offerings. McDonald's regards ethnic consumers as trendsetters. The restaurant chain often assesses their reactions to new menu items or advertisements before it rolls them out to the Caucasian market. For example, the fruit combinations in McDonald's smoothies are based on preferences the company's researchers discovered in ethnic communities.[13]

Geography

Many national marketers tailor their offerings to appeal to consumers who live in different parts of the country. Even the same product may go by different names depending upon where it's sold. For example, people call a sweet carbonated beverage a soda, pop, coke (even if it's a Sprite) or a soft drink in different parts of the U.S.A.[14]

Lifestyles

Consumers also have different *lifestyles*, even if they share other demographic characteristics such as gender or age. The way we feel about ourselves, the things we value, the things we like to do in our spare time—all of these factors help to determine which products will push our buttons or even those that make us feel better. Procter & Gamble developed its heartburn medicine Prilosec OTC with an ideal customer in mind based on a lifestyle analysis. Her name is Joanne, and she's a mother older than age 35 who's more likely to get heartburn from a cup of coffee than from an overdose of pizza and beer. A P&G executive observed, "We know Joanne. We know what she feels. We know what she eats. We know what else she likes to buy in the store."[15]

Segmenting by Behavior: Relationships and "Big Data"

Marketers carefully define customer segments and listen to people in their markets as never before. Many of them now realize that a key to success is building relationships between brands and customers that will last a lifetime. Marketers who subscribe to this philosophy of **relationship marketing** interact with customers on a regular basis and give them solid reasons to maintain a bond with the company over time. A focus on relationships is even more vital, especially during the nasty economic conditions we experienced in the years following the Great Recession of 2008; when times are tough, people tend to rely on their good friends for support!

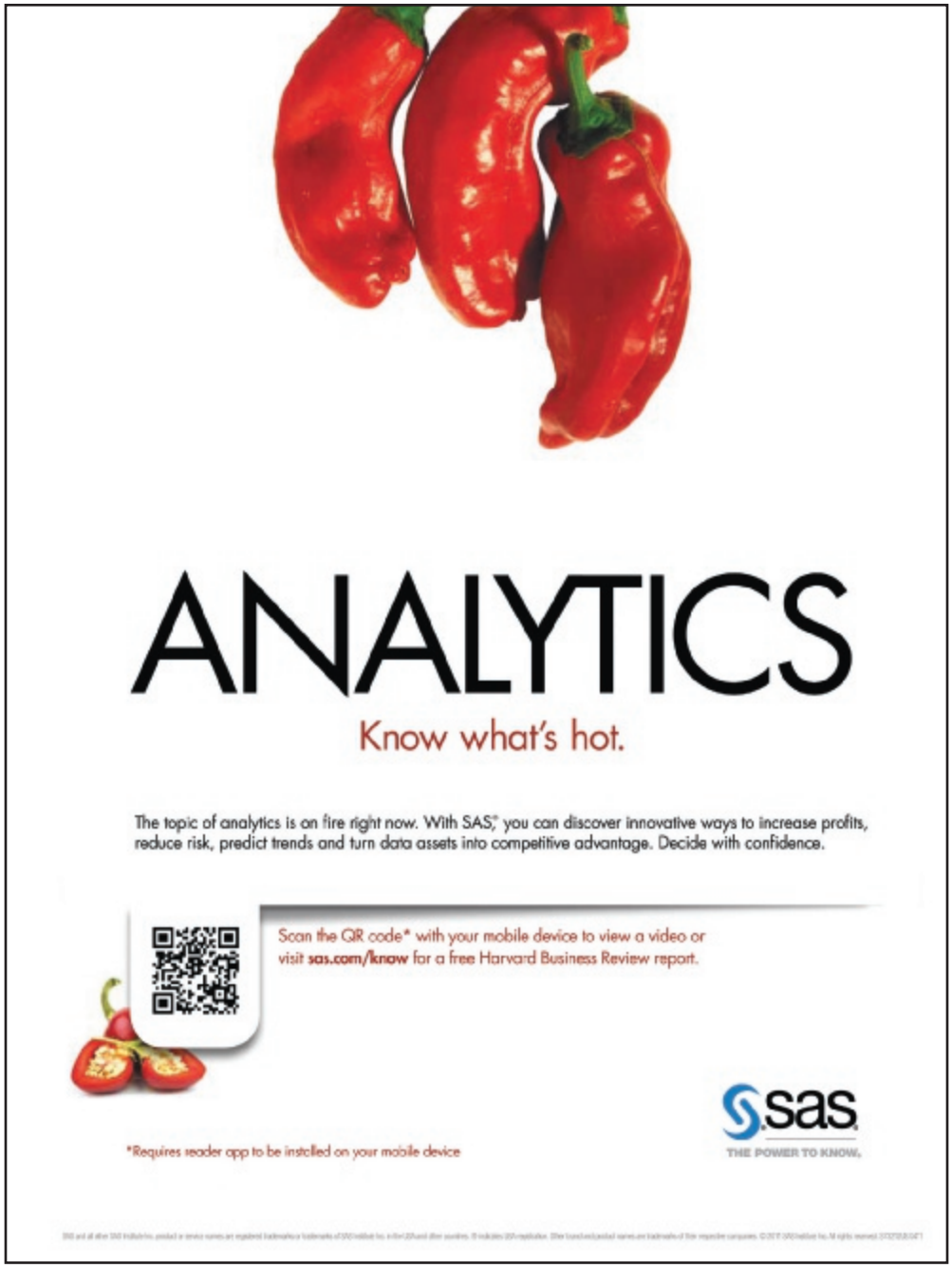
Database marketing tracks specific consumers' buying habits closely and tailors products and messages precisely to people's wants and needs based on this information. Walmart stores massive amounts of information on the 100 million people who visit its stores each week, and the company uses these data to fine-tune its offerings. For example, when the company analyzed how shoppers' buying patterns react when forecasters predict a major hurricane, it discovered that people do a lot more than simply stock up on flashlights. Sales of strawberry Pop-Tarts increased by about 700 percent, and the top-selling product of all is . . . beer. Based on these insights, Walmart loads its trucks with toaster pastries and six-packs to stock local stores when a big storm is approaching.[16]

At this very moment (and every moment thereafter until we croak), we are all generating massive amounts of information that holds tremendous value for marketers. You may not see it, but we are practically buried by data that come from many sources—sensors that collect climate information, the comments you and your friends make on your favorite social media sites, the credit card transactions we authorize, and even the GPS signals in our smartphones that let organizations know

where most of us are pretty much anytime day or night. This incredible amount of information has created a new field that causes tremendous excitement among marketing analysts (and other math geeks). The collection and analysis of extremely large datasets is called **Big Data**, and you'll be hearing a lot more about it in the next few years. Hint: If you have aptitude or interest in quantitative topics, this will be a desirable career path for you.

There were 3.8 billion internet users in 2017, a 42 percent increase in just three years! Social media platforms gain 840 new users every minute. And in that same minute, Instagram users upload 46,740 million posts.[17]

In addition to the huge *volume* of information marketers now have to play with, its *velocity* (speed) also enables companies to make decisions in real time that used to



Forward-looking companies mine the gold they find in "Big Data."
Source: Copyright © 2012, SAS Institute Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission of SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC, USA.

take months or years. For example, one group of researchers used the GPS phone signals that were coming from Macy's parking lots on Black Friday to estimate whether the department store was going to meet or exceed its sales projections for the biggest shopping day of the year—*before* the stores even reported their sales. This kind of intelligence allows financial analysts and marketing managers to move quickly as they buy and sell stocks or make merchandising decisions.

It's safe to say this data explosion is profoundly changing the way we think about consumer behavior. Companies, nonprofits, political parties, and even governments now have the ability to sift through massive quantities of information that enables them to make precise predictions about what products we will buy, what charities we will donate to, what candidates we will vote for, and what levers they need to push to make this even more likely to happen. Walmart alone collects more than 2.5 petabytes of data every hour from its customer transactions (the equivalent of about 20 million filing cabinets' worth of text).[18]

User-Generated Content (UGC)

Do you remember all those crazy Mentos/Diet Coke videos? At least 800 of them flooded YouTube after people discovered that when you drop the quarter-size candies into bottles of Diet Coke, you get a geyser that shoots 20 feet into the air. Needless to say, Mentos got a gusher of free publicity out of the deal, too.[19] Probably the biggest marketing phenomenon of this decade is **user-generated content**, whereby everyone can voice their opinions about products, brands, and companies on blogs, podcasts, and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and even film their own commercials that thousands view on sites such as YouTube. This important trend helps to define the era of **Web 2.0**: the rebirth of the internet from its original roots as a form of one-way transmission from producers to consumers to a social, interactive medium.

OBJECTIVE 1-3
Our choices as consumers relate in powerful ways to the rest of our lives.

Marketing's Impact on Consumers

Does marketing imitate life, or vice versa? After the movie *Wedding Crashers* became a big hit, hotels, wedding planners, and newlyweds across the United States reported an outbreak of uninvited guests who tried to gain access to parties.[20] For better or for worse, we all live in a world that the actions of marketers significantly influence.

Popular Culture Is Marketing Is Popular Culture . . .

Marketing stimuli surround us as advertisements, stores, and products compete for our attention and our dollars. Marketers filter much of what we learn about the world, whether through the affluence they depict in glamorous magazines, the roles actors play in commercials, or maybe the energy drink a rock star just "happens" to hold during a photo shoot. Ads show us how we should act with regard to recycling, alcohol consumption, the types of houses and cars we might wish to own—and even how to evaluate others based on the products they buy or don't buy. In many ways we are also at the mercy of marketers, because we rely on them to sell us products that are safe and that perform as promised, to tell us the truth about what they sell, and to price and distribute these products fairly.

Popular culture—the music, movies, sports, books, celebrities, and other forms of entertainment that the mass market produces and consumes—is both a product of and an inspiration for marketers. It also affects our lives in more far-reaching ways,



We are surrounded by elements of popular culture—the good, the bad, and the ugly. This ad for the Museum of Bad Art reminds us of that.
Source: With permission of the Museum of Bad Art.

ranging from how we acknowledge cultural events such as marriage, death, or holidays to how we view social issues such as climate change, gambling, and addictions.

Whether it's the Super Bowl, Christmas shopping, national health care, newspaper recycling, medical marijuana, body piercing, vaping, tweeting, or online video games, marketers play a significant role in our view of the world and how we live in it. And, we increasingly live in a branded world, where advertisers promote events and places of all kinds. A county in Washington State is selling naming rights to park trails, benches, and even trees. To plug the release of the movie *Superman: Man of Steel*, the producers supplied pastors with notes for a sermon entitled "Jesus: The Original Superhero."[21]

This cultural impact is hard to overlook, although many people do not seem to realize how much marketers influence their preferences for movie and musical heroes; the



Marketers exert a huge impact on the way we live, for better and worse. Many companies and entrepreneurs are jumping on the vaping bandwagon although the jury is still out as to whether this substitute for cigarette smoking is a good thing for smokers or simply a way to entice more young people to take up the smoking habit.
Source: Alex_Mac/Fotolia.

latest fashions in clothing, food, and decorating choices; and even the physical features that they find attractive or ugly in men and women. For example, consider the product icons that companies use to create an identity for their products. Many imaginary creatures and personalities, from the Pillsbury Doughboy to the Jolly Green Giant, at one time or another were central figures in popular culture. In fact, it is likely that more consumers could recognize such characters than could identify past presidents, business leaders, or artists. Although these figures never really existed, many of us feel as if we "know" them, and they certainly are effective *spokescharacters* for the products they represent.

All the World's a Stage

The sociological perspective of **role theory** takes the view that much of consumer behavior resembles actions in a play.[23] We as consumers seek the lines, props, and costumes necessary to put on a good performance. Because people act out many roles,

Marketing Opportunity

The interplay between marketing/media and "real life" is obvious when you consider the history of the cultural observance U.S. college students know as "Spring Break." Back in 1958, an English professor at Michigan State University heard some students talking about their Easter trip to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He decided to go along to observe (they probably loved that), and upon his return he wrote a novel he called *Where the Boys Are*. That turned into a hit movie and the title song by Connie Francis rocked the charts. The year after the movie debuted in 1960, the number of students who visited Florida on their spring vacation ballooned from 20,000 to 50,000. MTV hosted a concert at Daytona Beach in 1986 that attracted major advertisers, and—thus began the commercialization of a rite that now attracts hundreds of thousands of devotees every year—maybe even you.[22]



Technologies like Bluetooth connectivity allow consumers to interact with products more intimately, which in turn strengthens their relationships.
Source: Courtesy of The Procter & Gamble Company.

they sometimes alter their consumption decisions depending on the particular "play" they are in at the time. The criteria they use to evaluate products and services in one of their roles may be quite different from those they use in other roles. That's why it's important for marketers to provide each of us "actors" with the props we need to play all of our varied roles; these might include "up-and-coming executive," "geek," or "hipster."

As we have seen, one trademark of marketing strategies today is that many organizations try very hard to build relationships with customers. The nature of these relationships can vary, but these bonds help us to understand some of the possible meanings products have for us. Furthermore, researchers find that, like friendships and love affairs with other people, our relationships with brands evolve over time. Some resemble deep friendships, whereas others are more like exciting but short-lived flings.[24]

Here are some of the types of relationships a person might have with a product:

- Self-concept attachment—The product helps to establish the user's identity.
- Nostalgic attachment—The product serves as a link with a past self.
- Interdependence—The product is a part of the user's daily routine.
- Love—The product elicits emotional bonds of warmth, passion, or other strong emotion.[25]

OBJECTIVE 1-4
Our motivations to consume are complex and varied.

What Does It Mean to Consume?

What's the poop on Peeps? Every year, people buy about 1.5 billion of these mostly tasteless marshmallow chicks; about two-thirds of them sell around Easter. The newer version called Peeps Minis encourages people to eat them at other times as well, including quirky and obscure "holidays" such as "Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day" and "Lost Sock Memorial Day."[26]

Peeps have no nutritional value, but they do have a shelf life of two years. Maybe that's why not all Peeps get eaten. Devotees use them in decorations, dioramas, online slide shows, and sculptures. Some fans feel challenged to test their physical properties: On more than 200 Peeps websites, you can see fetishists skewering, microwaving, hammering, decapitating, and otherwise abusing the spongy confections.[27]

This fascination with a creepy little candy chick illustrates one of the fundamental premises of the modern field of consumer behavior: *People often buy products*



Even a very inexpensive product like Peeps can play an important role in a culture.
Source: garytog/Fotolia.

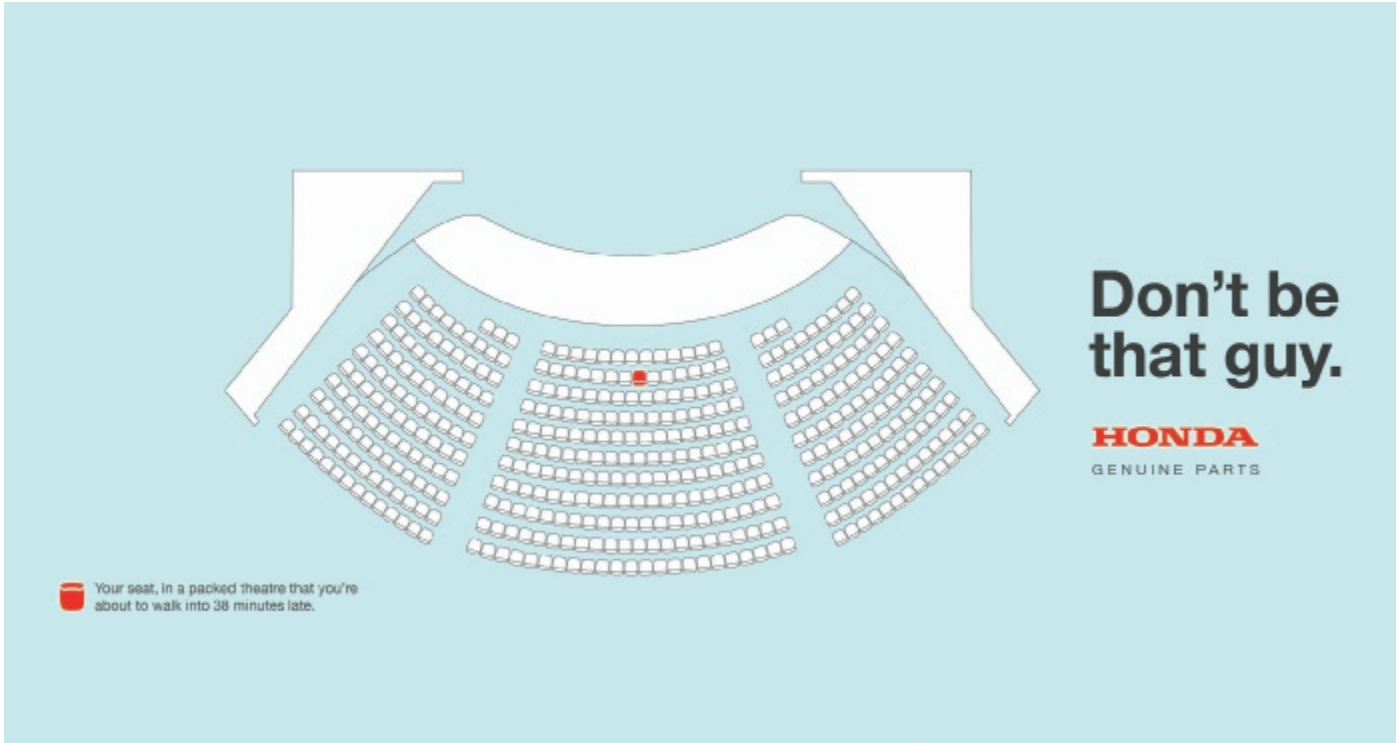
not for what they do, but for what they mean. This principle does not imply that a product's basic function is unimportant, but rather that the roles products play in our lives extend well beyond the tasks they perform. The deeper meanings of a product may help it to stand out from other similar goods and services. All things being equal, we choose the brand that has an image (or even a personality!) consistent with our underlying needs.

For example, although most people probably couldn't run faster or jump higher if they wear Nikes instead of Reeboks, many die-hard loyalists swear by their favorite brand. People choose between these archrivals (or other competitors) largely because of their *brand images*—meanings that have been carefully crafted with the help of legions of rock stars, athletes, slickly produced commercials, and many millions of dollars. So, when you buy a Nike "swoosh," you are doing more than choosing shoes to wear to the mall; you also make a lifestyle statement about the type of person you are or wish you were. For a relatively simple item made of leather and laces, that's quite a feat!

Our allegiances to sneakers, musicians, and even soft drinks help us define our place in modern society, and these choices also help each of us to form bonds with others who share similar preferences. This comment by a participant in a focus group captures the curious bonding that consumption choices can create: "I was at a Super Bowl party, and I picked up an obscure drink. Somebody else across the room went 'yo!' because he had the same thing. People feel a connection when you're drinking the same thing."[28]

As we'll see in Chapter 5, our motivations to consume range from the practical to the fanciful. In some cases, we decide to try a product because we want to learn more about the experience and in some way grow personally. For example, in one study undergraduates who were asked to try a new (fictitious) brand of beer were

Successful products satisfy needs and improve our lives in ways large and small. This South African ad subtly reminds us that our plans might go astray if we don't have a reliable form of transportation—and of course the quality auto parts that help to make that happen.
Source: Courtesy of Honda Motor Southern Africa.



more likely to do so when they believed their level of expertise with the product was relatively low (imagine that!), and thus there was an opportunity to enhance their knowledge about different attributes of beer.[29] In other cases, our choice of a product links more to our broader identity as a member of a larger entity such as an ethnic group or a country. In another study researchers found that emerging Chinese luxury brands such as Shanghai Tang and Shang Xia resonate with local consumers because they place a renewed value upon Chinese craftsmanship, values, and aesthetics.[30]

What Do We Need—Really?

One large survey explored some profound questions: How can we predict if someone will be happy? How does that feeling relate to living a meaningful life? The researchers concluded that happiness is linked to satisfying wants and needs, whereas meaningfulness relates to activities that express oneself and impact others in a positive way. Not surprisingly, people whose needs were satisfied were happier, but the findings went beyond that connection:

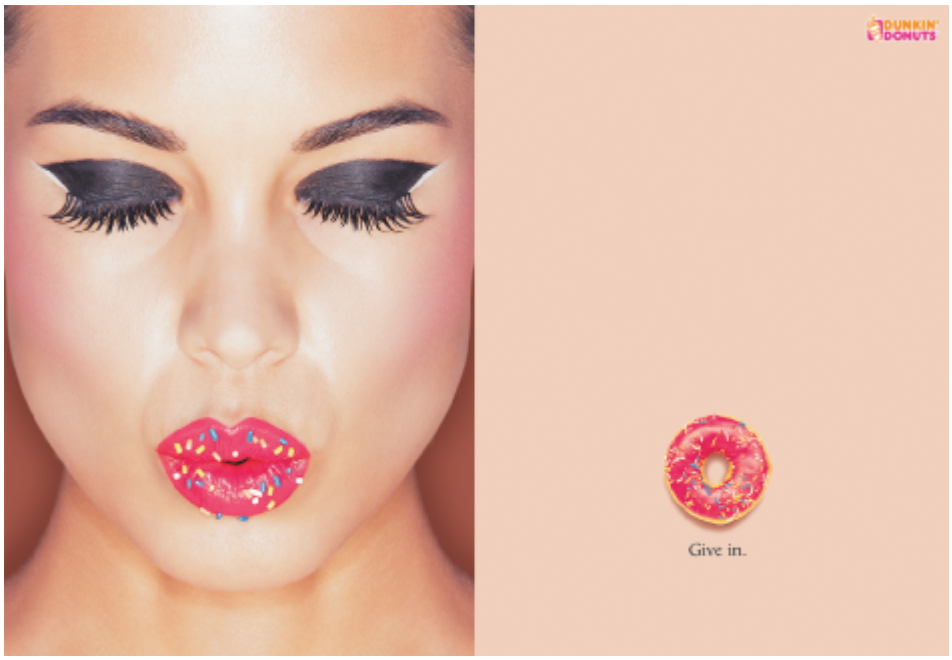
- Happiness was linked to being a taker rather than a giver, whereas meaningfulness went with being a giver rather than a taker.
- Happy people are more likely to think in the present rather than dwelling on the past or contemplating the future.
- Respondents who reported higher levels of worry, stress, and anxiety were less happy but had more meaningful lives. They spend a lot of time thinking about past struggles and imagining what will happen in the future. They are likely to agree that taking care of children and buying gifts for others are a reflection of who they are.
- The researchers concluded that "happiness without meaning characterizes a relatively shallow, self-absorbed or even selfish life, in which things go well, needs and desires are easily satisfied, and difficult or taxing entanglements are avoided."[31]

The distinction between a "happy" and a "meaningful" life brings up an important question: What is the difference between needing something and wanting it? The answer to this deceptively simple question actually explains a lot of consumer behavior! A **need** is something a person must have to live or achieve a goal. A **want** is a specific manifestation of a need that personal and cultural factors determine. For example, hunger is a basic need that all of us must satisfy; a lack of food creates a tension state that a person is motivated to reduce. But, the way he or she chooses to do that can take a lot of forms: One person's "dream meal" might include a cheeseburger, fries, and double-fudge Oreo cookies, whereas another might go for sushi followed by vegan and gluten-free chocolate cake balls.

The Global "Always-On" Consumer

OBJECTIVE 1-5
Technology and culture create a new "always-on" consumer.

Today many of us take for granted things that our grandparents only dreamed about. We instantly access people, places, and products with the click of a link. Many consumers travel to remote countries in



This ad from the United Arab Emirates appeals to our basic drive to reduce hunger.
Source: Designed and released by Publinet Advertising & Publicity LLC, Dubai, UAE.

a day rather than the weeks or months our ancestors needed, if they ever left their places of birth at all.

The majority of us now live in urban centers that bustle with people from many countries and that offer exotic foods from around the world. The United Nations defines a **megacity** as a metropolitan area with a total population of more than 10 million people. By 2011, there were already 20 such areas in the world. Researchers estimate that by 2030 three out of five people will live in cities.[32]

This concentration in urban centers, combined with population growth in developing countries and increasing demands for modernization by billions of people in booming economies such as China, India, and Brazil, is both a blessing and a curse. Quality of life for many everyday citizens is better than even that of the elite who lived several centuries ago (even kings bathed only once a month). On the other hand, millions live in squalor, children around the world go to bed hungry, and we all feel the effects unbridled growth contribute to pollution of our air, soil, and water. As we'll see later in the text, all of these issues relate directly to our understanding of consumer behavior—and to the impact companies and customers have on our future and the world that we will leave to our children.

The Digital Native: Living a Social [Media] Life

If you're a typical student, you probably can't recall a time when the internet was just a static, one-way platform that transmitted text and a few sketchy images. And believe it or not, in the last century even *that* crude technique didn't exist. You may have read about this in a history class: People actually *handwrote* letters to each other and waited for printed magazines to arrive in their mailboxes to learn about current events! The term **digital native** originated in a 2001 article to explain a new type of student who was starting to turn up on campus. These consumers grew up "wired" in a highly networked, always-on world where digital technology had always existed.[33]

It's fair to say that 24/7 access to smartphones and other social media devices has kindled a fascination among many of us with documenting *exactly* what we're doing and sharing the exciting news with others. A meal in a nice restaurant doesn't get touched until the diner posts a photo of it on Instagram. We may not learn that the person we're dating has broken up with us until we see they have changed their relationship status on Facebook. Today some of us wear tiny cameras that allow us to create a **lifelog** of every event we experience throughout the day.[34]

There's little doubt that the digital revolution is one of the most significant influences on consumer behavior, and the impact of the internet will continue to expand as more and more people around the world log in. Many of us are avid surfers, and it's hard to imagine a time when texting, tweeting, Facebooking, or pinning favorite items on Pinterest weren't an accepted part of daily life.

Electronic marketing makes our lives a lot easier. You can shop 24/7 without leaving home, you can read today's newspaper without getting drenched picking up a newsprint copy in a rainstorm, and you don't have to wait for the 6:00 PM news to find out what the weather will be like tomorrow—whether at home or around the globe. With the increasing use of handheld devices and wireless communications, you can get that same information—from stock quotes to the weather—even when you're away from your computer.

But our lives are about to change even more: We're just entering a new era of The **Internet of Things (IoT)**. This term refers to the growing network of interconnected devices embedded in objects that speak to one another. Analysts estimate that there are 20 billion connected devices out there now, with another 10 billion to be added over the next four years. You can see the impact of the IoT all around you, from the advent of **autonomous vehicles** (self-driving cars) to the "smart home" products that can automatically adjust your thermostat, control your windows, and even turn on your oven before you get home.[35]

We are witnessing a revolution in **M2M (machine-to-machine communication)** that will profoundly change our lives. Self-driving cars are just the tip of the iceberg.[36] **Artificial intelligence (AI)** applications that get better over time via **machine learning** already interact with us in the form of voice recognition software in digital assistants like Siri and Alexa, systems that process insurance claims, trade stocks, and diagnose exotic illnesses, as well as marketing applications that help advertisers to improve the precision of their ad placements, the speed with which they can deliver goods to their customers, and even help salespeople to predict which responses to consumers' queries are more likely to result in a purchase.[37]

Computer engineers are also introducing us to **robot companions** that serve us drinks and help disabled people to carry out routine tasks.[38] And yes, it's true: Already several companies are working on **sexbots** that combine the physical realism of silicon dolls with the AI functionality that (ostensibly) allows the user to maintain an actual relationship with his or her special android.[39]

Consumer Behavior as a Field of Study

OBJECTIVE 1-6
Many types of specialists study consumer behavior.

By now it should be clear that the field of consumer behavior encompasses many things, from the simple purchase of a carton of milk to the selection of a complex, networked computer system; from the decision to donate money to a charity to devious plans to rip off a company.

There's an awful lot to understand, and many ways to go about it. Although people have certainly been consumers for a long time, it is only recently that consumption per se has been the object of formal study. In fact, although many business schools now require that marketing majors take a consumer behavior course, most colleges did not even offer such a course until the 1970s.

Where Do We Find Consumer Researchers?

Where do we find consumer researchers? Just about anywhere we find consumers. Consumer researchers work for manufacturers, retailers, marketing research firms, governments and nonprofit organizations, and of course colleges and universities. You'll find them in laboratories, running sophisticated experiments that involve advanced neural imaging machinery, or in malls interviewing shoppers. They may conduct focus groups or run large-scale polling operations. For example, when an advertising agency began to work on a new campaign for retailer JC Penney, it sent staffers to hang out with more than 50 women for several days. They wanted to really understand the respondents' lives, so they helped them to clean their houses, carpool, cook dinner, and shop. As one of the account executives observed, "If you want to understand how a lion hunts, you don't go to the zoo—you go to the jungle."[40]

Researchers work on many types of topics, from everyday household products and high-tech installations to professional services, museum exhibits, and public policy issues such as the effect of advertising on children. Indeed, no consumer issue is too sacred for researchers: Some intrepid investigators bravely explore "delicate" categories such as incontinence products and birth control devices. The marketing director for Trojan condoms noted that, "Unlike laundry, where you can actually sit and watch people do their laundry, we can't sit and watch them use our product." For this reason, Trojan relies on clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, and cultural anthropologists to understand how men relate to condoms.[41] You'll find more detail about careers in consumer behavior in Appendix I.

Interdisciplinary Influences on the Study of Consumer Behavior

Many different perspectives shape the young field of consumer behavior. Indeed, it is hard to think of a field that is more interdisciplinary. You can find people with training in a wide range of disciplines—from psychophysiology to literature—doing consumer research. Universities, manufacturers, museums, advertising agencies, and governments employ consumer researchers. Several professional groups, such as the Association for Consumer Research and the Society for Consumer Psychology, have been formed since the mid-1970s.

To gain an idea of the diversity of interests of people who do consumer research, consider the list of professional associations that sponsor the field's major journal, the *Journal of Consumer Research*: the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, the American Statistical Association, the Association for Consumer Research, the Society for Consumer Psychology, the International Communication Association, the American Sociological Association, the Institute of Management Sciences, the American Anthropological Association, the American Marketing Association, the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, the American Association for

Public Opinion Research, and the American Economic Association. That's a pretty mixed bag.

Clearly there are a lot of researchers from diverse backgrounds who are into the study of consumer behavior. So, which is the "correct" discipline to look into these issues? You might remember a children's story about the blind men and the elephant. The gist of the story is that each man touched a different part of the animal and, as a result, the descriptions each gave of the elephant were quite different. This analogy applies to consumer research as well. Depending on the training and interests of the researchers studying it, they will approach the same consumer phenomenon in different ways and at different levels. Table 1.1 illustrates how we can approach a "simple" topic such as magazine usage from a range of perspectives. We'll take a closer look at some of the diverse methods researchers use to study consumer behavior in Appendix II.

Figure 1.2 provides a glimpse of some of the disciplines that work in the field and the level at which each tackles research issues. We can characterize them roughly in terms of their focus on micro- versus macro-consumer behavior topics. The fields closer to the top of the pyramid concentrate on the individual consumer (micro issues), and those toward the base are more interested in the collective activities that occur among larger groups of people, such as consumption patterns members of a culture or subculture share (macro issues). As we make our way through this text, we'll focus

TABLE 1.1 Interdisciplinary Research Issues in Consumer Behavior

Disciplinary Focus	Magazine Usage Sample Research Issues
Experimental Psychology: product role in perception, learning, and memory processes	How specific aspects of magazines, such as their design or layout, are recognized and interpreted; which parts of a magazine people are most likely to read.
Clinical Psychology: product role in psychological adjustment	How magazines affect readers' body images (e.g. do thin models make the average person feel overweight?)
Microeconomics/Human Ecology: product role in allocation of individual or family resources	Factors that influence the amount of money a household spends on magazines.
Social Psychology: product role in the behavior of individuals as members of social groups	Ways that ads in a magazine affect readers' attitudes toward the products they depict; how peer pressure influences a person's readership decisions
Sociology: product role in social institutions and group relationships	Pattern by which magazine preferences spread through a social group (e.g. a sorority)
Macroeconomics: product role in consumers' relations with the marketplace	Effects of the price of fashion magazines and expense of items advertised during periods of high unemployment
Semiotics/Literary Criticism: product role in the verbal and visual communication of meaning	Ways in which underlying messages communicated by models and ads in a magazine are interpreted
Demography: product role in the measurable characteristics of a population	Effects of age, income, and marital status of a magazine's readers
History: product role in societal changes over time	Ways in which our culture's depictions of "femininity" and masculinity in magazines have changed over time
Cultural Anthropology: product role in a society's beliefs and practices	Ways in which fashions and models in a magazine affect readers' definitions of masculine versus feminine behavior (e.g. the role of working women, sexual taboos)

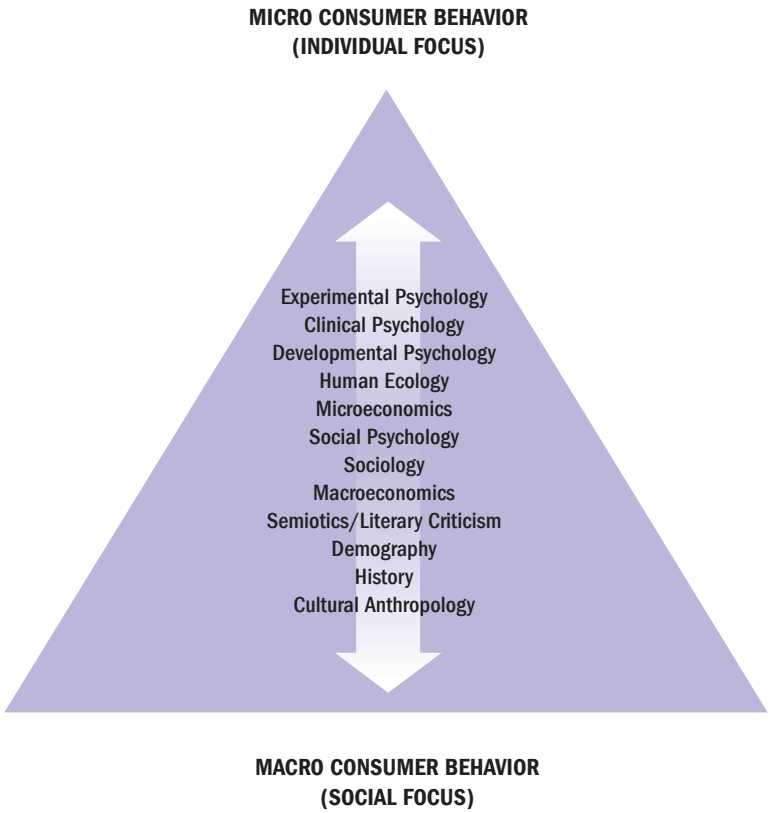


Figure 1. 2 THE PYRAMID OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

on the issues at the top (micro) and then make our way to the bottom of the pyramid by the end of the course. Hang in there!

Two Perspectives on Consumer Research

One general way in which we classify consumer research is in terms of the fundamental assumptions the researchers make about what they study and how to study it. We call a set of beliefs that guide our understanding of the world a **paradigm**. As in other fields of study, a paradigm dominates the discipline of consumer behavior. However, some believe the discipline is in the middle of a *paradigm shift*, which occurs when a competing paradigm challenges the dominant set of assumptions.

The basic set of assumptions underlying the dominant paradigm at this point in time is **positivism** (sometimes called *modernism*). This perspective has significantly influenced Western art and science since the late 16th century. It emphasizes that human reason is supreme and that there is a single, objective truth that science can discover. Positivism encourages us to stress the function of objects, to celebrate technology, and to regard the world as a rational, ordered place with a clearly defined past, present, and future.

The newer paradigm of **interpretivism** (or *postmodernism*) questions these assumptions.[42] Proponents of this perspective argue that our society emphasizes science and technology too much, and they feel that this ordered, rational view of behavior denies or ignores the complex social and cultural world in which we really live. Others feel that positivism puts too much emphasis on material well-being and that its logical outlook is directed by an ideology that stresses the homogenous views of a

culture dominated by (dead) white males. And, as we'll see in the next chapter, some adherents to this view also believe researchers should not just study consumer issues, but act on them as well.

Interpretivists instead stress the importance of symbolic, subjective experience, and the idea that meaning is in the mind of the person—that is, we each construct our own meanings based on our unique and shared cultural experiences, so there are no right or wrong answers. In this view, the world in which we live is a **pastiche**, or mixture of images and ideas.[43] This perspective rejects the value we assign to products because they help us to create order; instead, it focuses on regarding consumption as offering a set of diverse experiences. Table 1.2 summarizes the major differences between these two perspectives on consumer research.

In recent years the interpretivist focus has gained momentum and although it's still not the dominant focus of consumer researchers, it's quite commonplace to see research studies that adhere to this perspective, or its current incarnation that many refer to as **Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)**. This label refers generally to research that regards consumption from a social and cultural point of view rather than more narrowly as an economic exchange. CCT studies embrace a variety of topics that range



The expanded view of consumer behavior embraces much more than the study of what and why we buy; it also focuses on how marketers influence consumers and how consumers use the products and services marketers sell. In this case, a hotel in Dubai promotes responsible behavior.
Source: Courtesy of Marco Polo Hotel/Dubai; Brandcom Agency.

TABLE 1.2 Positivist versus Interpretivist Approaches to Consumer Behavior

Assumptions	Positivist Approach	Interpretivist Approach
Assumption	Positivist view	Interpretivist view
Reality is. . .	objective	socially constructed
Knowledge is. . .	context independent and time-free	context dependent and time-bound
The researcher and the respondent are. . .	separate and independent	interactive and the researcher is part of the phenomenon he or she studies

Source: Adapted from Laurel Anderson Hudson and Julie L. Ozanne. Alternative Ways of Seeking Knowledge in Consumer Research. *Journal of Consumer Research,* Mar 1988, Vol. 14(4), 508–521.

from how the media shapes our conceptions of our bodies or how disadvantaged people cope with poverty to how Harley-Davidson riders participate in an active community of bike lovers.[44]

OBJECTIVE 1-7
There are differing perspectives regarding how and what we should understand about consumer behavior.

Consumer Trends: Keep Ahead to Keep Up

It's crucial for marketers of all stripes to stay on top of **consumer trends**. This term does not refer to specific brands or styles that may be in vogue today, but rather underlying values that drive consumers toward certain products and services and away from others. As we'll see, these values evolve over time. For example, some analysts argue that our focus on acquiring physical objects is shifting toward the consumption of experiences instead. This consumer trend is consistent with research that shows experiential purchases provide greater happiness and satisfaction because they allow us to connect with others in an increasingly impersonal society.

Why is it so important to understand consumer trends? Very simply, a brand that aligns with a dominant value stands a much better chance of success. Because companies often need substantial lead time to launch a new product or reposition an existing one, it's crucial to track not just where consumers are, but where they're going. That way you can be there to greet them when they arrive.

Consumer trend forecasting is big business, and many organizations devote huge resources to monitoring the "bleeding edge" of consumer behavior. Companies like Mintel, Euromonitor, and GfK publish consumer trend reports that alert clients to what the companies view as basic changes in customers' priorities.

It can seem at times that there are as many consumer trends as there are trend watchers, and sometimes their predictions create a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, Pantone publishes an influential color forecasting report that many

manufacturers use to guide their choices of future color palettes for cars, clothing, house paints, and other products. Since so many companies heed these predictions, perhaps it's not too surprising to find the very hues Pantone predicted on store shelves!

It's an amazing time to study consumer behavior. In so many ways our basic assumptions about how companies and people relate to one another are being disrupted. Throughout this text, we're going to learn about the "bleeding edge" of consumer behavior; the many ways that these relationships change on almost daily basis. These are some of the important consumer trends that I believe will impact marketing strategies in the near future:

- Sharing economy: A continued blurring of the boundary between producers and consumers, as everyday people take on the roles of hoteliers, taxi drivers, and even advertising agencies. We will see a de-emphasis on the value of owning products such as automobiles and power tools as opposed to leasing them on an as-needed basis. Today consumers want to avoid ownership and the financial costs and responsibilities that come with it. We would rather "rent" an experience than own a thing.
- Authenticity and personalization: An aversion to corporate "hype," as consumers place a premium on knowing the lineage of the companies they patronize. They also will demand more individualized experiences rather than buying mass-market products and services. There will be an increase in "artisanal" products and continuing growth of the "maker movement," augmented by wider availability of 3D printing technologies. Shoppers are willing to pay more for an item when they know exactly where it comes from, and they are assured that "real people" have thoughtfully selected the things from which they choose. This process of curation, which used to refer to an expert who carefully chose pieces to include in a museum exhibit, now applies to a range of consumer products such as food, clothing, and travel.
- Blurring of gender roles: The continuing movement away from "gender binarism" as sexual identity becomes more fluid and more people refuse to identify themselves as male or female. Already, California has changed requirements to allow residents to register as nonbinary.
- Diversity and multiculturalism: Racial and ethnic divisions will blur as people are exposed to other groups both in person (e.g. at the workplace) and online. Intermarriage rates continue to accelerate; a growing number of countries (including the United States) no longer adhere to strict categories when they ask citizens to identify racial identity. A recent study that surveyed over 2,000 people reported that 80 percent of parents like to see diverse families in advertisements. Sixty-six percent said that brands that showed reverence for all kinds of families was an important factor when they chose among competing options.
- Social shopping: The traditional lone decision maker will become harder to find, as ready access to product reviews and others' immediate feedback on potential purchases turns many buying situations into committee decisions. A 2016 Pew Research Center survey found that 65 percent of Americans say they compare prices they see in stores with those they can find online and buy whichever is cheaper, while 40 percent say they almost always consult online reviews before they buy something new. We will see continued growth of video as the go-to medium for posting and sharing.
- Income inequality: The gap between rich and poor will continue to grow in the United States, which will exacerbate pressure toward a dual society of haves (in gated communities) and have-nots. The most affluent 160,000 US families have as much wealth as the poorest 145 million families.
- Healthy and ethical living: A continued focus on wellness, physical fitness, and environmental sustainability. This priority is likely to divide along social class lines, as growing economic inequality makes it difficult for less affluent consumers to afford healthy and sustainable products.

- Simplification: A movement away from hyperchoice and toward decluttering one's life and possessions. There will be more priority on experiences rather than acquiring things.
- Interconnection and the Internet of Things: The rapid growth of AI will facilitate the popularity of products such as wearable computers that monitor physical activity and many other functions. We will see growth in the consumer trend of smart homes.
- Anonymity: Data hacking, cyberbullying, and advertising tracking will fuel a desire for "the right to be forgotten." Consumers will flock to platforms like Snapchat that don't retain posts, or that allow users to create alternative identities. There will be greater emphasis on regulating online businesses as public utilities and forcing advertisers to reveal when they have paid for online advertising.

Consumer trends are a moving target. Keep ahead to keep up!

Taking It from Here: The Plan of the Book

This book covers many facets of consumer behavior, and in the chapters to come we will highlight many of the research perspectives that we only briefly described in this one. The plan of the text is simple: It goes from micro to macro. Think of it as a sort of photograph album of consumer behavior: Each chapter provides a "snapshot" of consumers, but the lens used to take each picture gets successively wider. First we'll focus on the crucially important topic of consumer well-being in the next chapter of Section 1, as we consider some of the consequences of our decisions for our environment and ourselves. In Section 2 we'll dive deeper into the facets of individual consumer behavior as we look at internal factors such as how we learn about products and services and then use this information to decide how we feel about them—and about ourselves as individuals. In Section 3 we zoom in on how exactly we choose products and services from a field of competitors and how we decide to purchase, use, and even dispose of these products. Finally in Section 4 we expand the lens to consider external influences on these decisions such as the groups to which we belong and the opinions of others we access via both traditional and new media.

MyLab Marketing

Visit www.pearson.com/mylab/marketing for Marketing Metrics questions available only in MyLab Marketing.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. **Consumer behavior is a process.**

   Consumer behavior is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. A consumer may purchase, use, and dispose of a product, but different people may perform these functions. In addition, we can think of consumers as role players who need different products to help them play their various parts.

2. **Marketers have to understand the wants and needs of different consumer segments.**

   Market segmentation is an important aspect of consumer behavior. Consumers can be segmented according to many dimensions, including product usage, demographics

(the objective aspects of a population, such as age and sex), and psychographics (psychological and lifestyle characteristics). Emerging developments, such as the new emphasis on relationship marketing and the practice of database marketing, mean that marketers are much more attuned to the wants and needs of different consumer groups.

3. **Our choices as consumers relate in powerful ways to the rest of our lives.**

   Marketing activities exert an enormous impact on individuals. Consumer behavior is relevant to our understanding of both public policy issues (e.g. ethical marketing practices) and the dynamics of popular culture.

4. **Our motivations to consume are complex and varied.**

   Marketers try to satisfy consumer needs, but the reasons people purchase any product can vary widely. The identification of consumer motives is an important step to ensure that a product will satisfy appropriate needs. Traditional approaches to consumer behavior focus on the abilities of products to satisfy rational needs (utilitarian motives), but hedonic motives (e.g. the need for exploration or for fun) also play a key role in many purchase decisions.

5. **Technology and culture create a new "always-on" consumer.**

   The internet and social media transform the way consumers interact with companies and with each other. Online commerce allows us to locate obscure products from around the world, and consumption communities provide forums for people to share opinions and product recommendations.

6. **Many types of specialists study consumer behavior.**

   The field of consumer behavior is interdisciplinary; it is composed of researchers from many fields who share an interest in how people interact with the marketplace. We can categorize these disciplines by the degree to which their focus is micro (the individual consumer) or macro (the consumer as a member of groups or of the larger society).

7. **There are differing perspectives regarding how and what we should understand about consumer behavior.**

   Researchers who study consumer behavior do so both for academic purposes and to inform marketing organizations about practical decisions. We can roughly divide research orientations into two approaches: The positivist perspective emphasizes the objectivity of science and the consumer as a rational decision maker. The interpretivist (or CCT) perspective, in contrast, stresses the subjective meaning of the consumer's individual experience and the idea that any behavior is subject to multiple interpretations rather than to one single explanation.

KEY TERMS

80/20 Rule, 8
Big Data, 12
Consumer, 7
Consumer behavior, 6
Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), 24
Consumer trends, 25
Consumption communities, 5
Database marketing, 11
Demographics, 5
Digital native, 19
Exchange, 7
Heavy users, 8
Internet of Things, (IoT) 20
Interpretivism, 23
Lifelog, 20
M2M (machine-to-machine communication), 20
Machine learning, 20
Market segmentation strategies, 5
Megacity, 19
Need, 18
Paradigm, 23
Pastiche, 24
Popular culture, 13
Positivism, 23
Relationship marketing, 11
Robot companions, 20
Role theory, 15
Sexbots, 20
Social media, 9
User-generated content, 13
Want, 18
Web 2.0, 13

REVIEW

1-1 Provide a definition of consumer behavior.

1-2 What are demographics? Give three examples of demographic characteristics.

1-3 What is market segmentation? Give three examples of market segments.

1-4 What is role theory, and how does it help us to understand consumer behavior?

1-5 What do we mean by an exchange?

1-6 Why is it important for businesses to learn about their heavy users?

1-7 What is "Big Data?"

1-8 What is popular culture, and how does this concept relate to marketing and consumer behavior?

1-9 What do we mean by the term *global consumer culture*?

1-10 Name two different disciplines that study consumer behavior. How would their approaches to the same issue differ?

1-11 This chapter states "people often buy products not for what they do but for what they mean." Explain the meaning of this statement and provide an example.

1-12 What are the major differences between the positivist and interpretivist paradigms in consumer research?

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

1-13 As robot companions become increasingly common, what are the ramifications for human relationships?

1-14 What aspects of consumer behavior would interest a financial planner? A university administrator? A graphic arts designer? A social worker in a government agency? A nursing instructor?

1-15 Critics of targeted marketing strategies argue that this practice is discriminatory and unfair, especially if such a strategy encourages a group of people to buy a product that may be injurious to them or that they cannot afford. For example, community leaders in largely minority neighborhoods have staged protests against billboards promoting beer or cigarettes in these areas. However, the Association of National Advertisers argues that banning targeted marketing constitutes censorship and thus is a violation of the First Amendment. What are your views regarding this issue?

1-16 The chapter discussed a study that compared and contrasted people who lead "happy" lives versus those with "meaningful" lives. How does this distinction relate to the way you decide to spend your time and money? How does it relate to consumer behavior more generally?[45]

1-17 A book bemoans the new wave of consumer-generated content, labeling it "the cult of the amateur." It compares the social networking phenomenon to the old story about the monkeys: If you put an infinite number of monkeys in a room with an infinite number of typewriters, eventually they will (by hitting keys randomly) reproduce all the major works of literature. In other words, the large majority of user-generated content is at about the same level, and the future of professionally produced, quality work is in doubt.[46] Do you agree or disagree with this assertion?

1-18 A few years ago a publicity campaign for a late-night cartoon show backfired when it aroused fears of a terrorist attack and temporarily shut down the city of Boston. The effort consisted of one-foot-tall blinking electronic signs with hanging wires and batteries that marketers used to promote the Cartoon Network TV show *Aqua Teen Hunger Force* (a surreal series about a talking milkshake, a box of fries, and a meatball). The signs were placed on bridges and in other high-profile spots in several US cities. Most depicted a boxy, cartoon character giving passersby the finger. The bomb squads and other police personnel required to investigate the mysterious boxes cost the city of Boston more than $500,000—and a lot of frayed nerves.[47] Is there a line between attention-getting pubicity stunts and activities that should be illegal or forbidden?

▶ APPLY

1-19 Talk to car owners and probe to see what (if any) relationships they have with their vehicles. Do these feelings correspond to the types of consumer/product attachments we discussed in this chapter? How are these relationships acted on? (Hint: See if any of the respondents give their cars a nickname, or if they "decorate" them with personal items.) To give you some additional insight, check out a YouTube video titled *I Love My Car*! that originally aired on the TV show *My Strange Addiction*.

1-20 The specific way we choose to satisfy a need depends on our unique history, learning experiences, and cultural environment. For example, two classmates may feel their stomachs rumble during a lunchtime lecture. If neither person has eaten since the night before, the strength of their respective needs (hunger) would be about the same. However, the ways each person goes about satisfying this need might be quite different. Conduct this exercise with classmates: "As you probably know, a prisoner who is sentenced to die traditionally gets to choose his or her 'last meal.' If you had to do this (let's hope not), describe your last meal in detail." Compare the responses you get, especially among people from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. What similarities and differences emerge?

CASE STUDY Hey Alexa—What Is Consumer Behavior?

Amazon's Echo is the market leader in smart speakers, with a nearly 72 percent market share.[48] Powered by the Alexa digital assistant software, customers use the Echo to listen to music, as an alarm clock, as a tool for getting answers to questions, and even as a source of jokes to brighten their day. Alexa and competitive products are also becoming a major factor in consumer decision making that may radically change the relationship between brands and their customers.

First released to the general public in 2015, the Echo is a small desktop speaker that users place in their bedroom, living room, or kitchen—sometimes all three. Users interact with it by calling out "Alexa" followed by a question or command. Through its basic functionality, the unit responds to commands to play music, report the weather, or to read your appointments for the day.[49] A wider array of capabilities is provided through the installation of "skills"—third party apps that use Alexa to accomplish tasks. Amazon says there are more than 30,000 of these and that four out of five registered customers have used at least one.[50] Need to find a breed of dog that behaves in apartments? Purina can help with their Ask Purina skill. Tide Stain Remover will help you remove that spot on your favorite shirt. And you can just shout out to Campbell's Kitchen skill and a helpful assistant will read you a recipe while you cook![51,52]

While it operates primarily on the Amazon Echo, Alexa can run on a variety of devices, including in selected automobiles. Alexa fits into a broader category of technology known as AI (artificial intelligence) assistants. This category includes tools such as Apple's Siri, Microsoft Cortana, and Google Assistant, the latter of which is available on 400 million devices.[53] In one way, Alexa and her humanoid friends simply provide another way to access the internet, by voice instead of keystrokes. However, the embedded AI capabilities combined with the human touch of voice command/voice response are significant differences that are changing the game for brand marketing, and not necessarily in positive ways.

AI assistants offer consumers savings in time by automatically ordering routine items, and by evaluating the many options for nonroutine purchases, making logical choices based on algorithms or customer-defined criteria. For example, shopping for shoes can be fun, but choosing the perfect electric toothbrush can be painful. The AI assistant can do the heavy lifting for you, sorting through reviews and ratings and picking out the toothbrush that best fits your needs at a price you can afford. Through its understanding of your needs, its access to the full spectrum of product options, and its algorithms, your trusty AI assistant provides the trifecta of shopping pleasure: convenience, lower costs, and risk reduction.

The rise of AI assistants as a dominant channel has important implications for brand management. We often buy the same brand repeatedly to lower the risk of a bad decision. If consumers start to trust Alexa with product choices, brands lose an important benefit. Loyalty can be very fleeting and more dependent upon being in sync with the algorithms of the AI assistant than with the positioning in the mind of the customer. Brand loyalty–building activities such as understanding/filling needs, assuring quality, and focusing on customer interests may be better performed by AI.

Customer satisfaction becomes a more sophisticated proposition in a world dominated by AI assistants. Much of marketing research is focused on understanding the levels and dimensions of satisfaction; what if AI platforms could do a better job of assessing—and projecting—satisfaction than the consumers themselves? Smart assistants could be able to anticipate, for example, how much room in a car an auto shopper would sacrifice for improved fuel efficiency.

In the age of AI, promotion will likely be directed more to "push" activities (focused on the distribution channel) than "pull" activities (focused on the consumer). This is not so different from convincing retailers to put products on their shelves. Except now that "shelf" is digitally embedded in the algorithm of an AI assistant. In this environment, the power of the AI assistants increases significantly, most notably

Amazon, which now has a long list of its own "private label" brands.[54] This could also radically change the amount of promotion devoted to advertising, particularly of the image-oriented variety. Alexa may not care if she purchases the same shampoo as all the cool AI assistants buy.

The personal touch that the ability to interact with a human and humanlike voice provides is another important aspect of the use of AI assistants. The movie *Her* explored the connection that could exist with a computer-generated voice-only being.[55] Although that was a fictional account, research has found that that some AI assistant users are passionate about their devices, with over 30 percent reporting that Alexa or Google Assistant is "like a friend to me."[56] Could that feeling affect your trust in the recommendations of the AI assistant?

So, does Alexa know consumer behavior and, even more important, will she and her AI friends drive it? AI assistants are still in an early stage of adoption. Although hundreds of millions of consumers could use AI via Google, only one in five U.S. consumers has access to a smart speaker and just over 2 percent make a purchase daily. The majority of Alexa users have never used any of the 30,000 skills available.[57] As use of AI assistants grows, the "Age of Alexa" will likely involve hits and misses for brand marketers who must determine the optimal strategy for taking advantage of this new technology.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 1-1 Choose two of your favorite brands and devise an idea for an Alexa "skill" that consumers could find useful. How would these skills help sell more of the brands' products and/or increase customer loyalty?

CS 1-2 How can brands remain relevant in the Age of Alexa? What strategies should brand managers employ to continue to influence consumer purchase decisions if consumers become more reliant on AI assistants?

CS 1-3 What kinds of products or brands will most likely be either negatively or positively affected by an increased use of AI assistants? Explain your answer.

MyLab Marketing

If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

1-21 List the three stages in the consumption process. Describe the issues that you considered in each of these stages when you made a recent important purchase.

1-22 This chapter states that people play different roles and that their consumption behaviors may differ depending on the particular role they are playing. State whether you agree or disagree with this statement, giving examples from your personal life. Try to construct a "stage set" for a role you play, specifying the props, costumes, and script that you use to play a role (e.g. job interviewee, conscientious student, party animal).

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2 Consumer Well-Being

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why

- **2-1** Ethical business is good business.
- **2-2** Marketers have an obligation to provide safe and functional products as part of their business activities.
- **2-3** Consumer behavior impacts directly on major public policy issues that confront our society.
- **2-4** Consumer behavior can be harmful to individuals and to society.

Christen wheels her cart down the grocery aisles, absent-mindedly throwing in the usual fill-ins she always buys on her weekly trip. She reaches for a box of Tide laundry detergent and is about to toss it into the cart when she stops herself in midair: She just remembered her resolution to think a little more about the environmental impact of the cleaning products and other groceries she brings into the house. When her son Jon came home from school and asked her how she was helping to preserve the world for the next generation, she was embarrassed that she couldn't answer him. From the mouths of babes! Time for this 33-year-old to learn a lesson.

Might as well start with detergents—Christen thinks about that news report she saw last week about the excessive use of chemicals and other additives that are bad for the water supply, not to mention the huge amount of fresh water U.S. consumers waste just to wash their clothes.

Christen has always bought Tide; it's the same product her mother used for years. Now as she takes a closer look in the detergent section she notices a lot of other brands, including some "ecologically sound" ones she's never seen before like Dropps, Ecos, Method, and Seventh Generation. When she looks at each box, Tracy notices that some carry different "ecolabels," including one issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency called DfE (Design for the Environment). Hmmm…Tide doesn't have that on its box. On the other hand, the Tide package does recommend just using cold water instead of hot for the laundry, and Procter & Gamble (P&G) now sells a concentrated version that doesn't require as much soap to do the wash. Christen also notices that the "green" brands seem to cost a bit more. Today every penny counts—how much of her precious grocery budget is worth sacrificing for a slightly less sudsy wash? All of these choices are really confusing. Maybe she should stick with what she knows and let others worry about the environment. Then again, what will she tell Jon the next time he asks about how "green" she is?



Source: DmitriMaruta/Shutterstock.

OBJECTIVE 2-1
Ethical business is good business.

Business Ethics and Consumer Rights

Mainstream U.S. shoppers like Christen increasingly choose "green" products that are better for the environment. On the other hand, there has been a lot of hype about "the green revolution"; since the recession of 2008, consumers are a lot more cost-conscious. To add to the confusion, even well-intentioned shoppers have trouble figuring out which brands really are better. It's practically a full-time job to sort out all the competing claims. One solution is for independent rating agencies to develop labeling systems that the shopper can use to decide among options—but even these systems can be overwhelming. There are 464 eco-label systems worldwide.[1] The U.S. government is trying to encourage businesses and consumers to select green cleaning products; the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) even signed a promotion agreement with NASCAR to raise awareness of the DfE label. In addition to DfE certification and other rating systems the cleaning industry sponsors, a few manufacturers and retailers even offer their own labels, such as SC Johnson's Greenlist and Eco-Scale by the Whole Foods grocery chain.[2] Other major brands, like P&G's Tide, sell highly concentrated versions that are formulated to work with cold water. It's tough to make apples-to-apples comparisons, and these competing systems threaten to "throw the baby out with the bath water" if consumers like Tracy throw up their hands and just stick to what they know. Is it possible for marketers to "do good" and still "do well"; can they provide profits and still do what's right for customers and the environment?

The answer is simple: *Ethical business is good business*. A majority of consumers around the world say they are willing to pay more for products and services from companies that are committed to positive social and environmental impact. What is even more encouraging is that younger consumers express this preference even more strongly: About three-quarters of them feel this way, and 81 percent of them even expect their favorite companies to declare publicly what they are doing to make the world a better place.[3]

Business ethics are rules of conduct that guide actions in the marketplace; these are the standards against which most people in a culture judge what is right and what is wrong, good or bad. These universal values include honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, respect, justice, integrity, concern for others, accountability, and loyalty.

Of course, notions of right and wrong differ among people, organizations, and cultures. Some businesses believe it is okay for salespeople to pull out all the stops to persuade customers to buy, even if this means they mislead them; other firms feel that anything less than total honesty with customers is terribly wrong. Because each culture has its own set of values, beliefs, and customs, companies around the world define ethical business behaviors quite differently.

These cultural differences certainly influence whether business practices such as bribery are acceptable. Since 1977 the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act makes it illegal for U.S. executives to bribe foreigners to gain business. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), to which most industrialized countries belong, also outlaws bribery. Still, these practices are common in many countries. In Japan, it's called *kuroi kiri* (black mist); in Germany, it's *schmiergeld* (grease money), whereas Mexicans refer to *la mordida* (the bite), the French say *pot-de-vin* (jug of wine), and Italians speak of the *bustarella* (little envelope). They're all talking about *baksheesh*, the Middle Eastern term for a "tip" to grease the wheels of a transaction. Giving "gifts" in exchange for getting business from suppliers or customers is acceptable and even expected in many countries.

Regardless of whether they do it intentionally, some marketers do violate their bonds of trust with consumers. In some cases, these actions are actually illegal, as when a manufacturer deliberately mislabels the contents of a package. Or a retailer may adopt a "bait-and-switch" selling strategy that lures consumers into the store when it offers inexpensive products with the sole intent to get them to switch to higher-priced goods.

In other cases, marketing practices have detrimental effects on society even though they are not explicitly illegal. Some companies erect billboards advertising alcohol and tobacco products in low-income neighborhoods; others sponsor commercials that objectify women as they pander to male viewers.

Needs and Wants: Do Marketers Manipulate Consumers?

One of the most common and stinging criticisms of marketing is that companies convince consumers they "need" many material things, and that they will be unhappy and inferior people if they do not have these "necessities." The issue is a complex one and is certainly worth considering: Do marketers give people what they want, or do they tell people what they *should* want?

Who controls the market—companies or consumers? This question is even more complicated as new ways of buying, having, and being are invented every day. It seems that the "good old days" of *marketerspace*—a time when companies called the shots and decided what they wanted their customers to know and do—are dead and gone. Many people now feel empowered to choose how, when, or if they will interact with corporations as they construct their own **consumerspace**.

In this new environment, individuals dictate to companies the types of products they want and how, when, and where (or even if) they want to learn about those products. In turn, companies need to develop and leverage brand equity in bold new ways to attract the loyalty of these consumer "nomads." People still "need" companies—but in new ways and on their own terms. As we'll see throughout this text, profound changes in consumer behavior are influencing how people search for product information and evaluate alternative brands. In the brave new world of consumerspace, we have much greater potential to shape our own marketing destinies.[4]

Do Marketers Create Artificial Needs?

The marketing system has come under fire from both ends of the political spectrum. On the one hand, some members of the religious right believe that marketers contribute to the moral breakdown of society when they present images of hedonistic pleasure and encourage the pursuit of secular humanism at the expense of spirituality and the environment. A coalition of religious groups called the National Religious Partnership for the Environment claims that gas-guzzling cars and other factors that cause climate change are contrary to Christian moral teachings about protecting people and the Earth.[5]

On the other hand, some leftists argue that the same deceitful promises of material pleasure function to buy from people who would otherwise be revolutionaries working to change the system.[6] According to this argument, the marketing system creates demand—demand that only its products can satisfy.

A Response. As we saw in Chapter 1, *a need is a basic biological motive; a want represents one way that society has been taught to satisfy the need.* For example, thirst is a biologically based need. Marketers teach us to want Coca-Cola to satisfy that thirst rather than, say, goat's milk. Thus, the need is already there; marketers simply recommend ways to satisfy it. A basic objective of marketing is to create awareness that needs exist, not to create needs.

Is Marketing Necessary?

More than 50 years ago, the social critic Vance Packard wrote, "Large-scale efforts are being made, often with impressive success, to channel our unthinking habits, our purchasing decisions, and our thought processes by the use of insights gleaned from psychiatry and the social sciences."[7] The economist John Kenneth Galbraith charged that radio and television are important tools to accomplish this manipulation of the masses.[8] Because consumers don't need to be literate to use these media, repetitive and compelling communications can reach almost everyone. This criticism may even



The American Association of Advertising Agencies created this ad to counter charges that ads create artificial needs.

Source: Used with permission of the American Association of Advertising Agencies.

be more relevant to online communications, where a simple click delivers a world of information to us.

Some people charge that marketers arbitrarily link products to desirable social attributes, so they foster a materialistic society where what we own defines our value as a person. One influential critic even argued that the problem is that we are not materialistic *enough*: We do not sufficiently value goods for the utilitarian functions they deliver but instead focus on the irrational value of goods for what they symbolize. According to this view, for example, "Beer would be enough for us, without the additional promise that in drinking it we show ourselves to be manly, young at heart, or neighborly. A washing machine would be a useful machine to wash clothes, rather than an indication that we are forward-looking or an object of envy to our neighbors."[9]



A poster for Westin Hotels' Well-Being Movement.
Source: Courtesy of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.

A Response. *Products meet existing needs, and marketing activities only help to communicate their availability.*[10] The **economics of information** perspective regards advertising as an important source of consumer learning.[11] This view emphasizes the economic cost of the time we spend to search for products. Accordingly, advertising is a service for which consumers are willing to pay because the information it provides reduces their search time.

Do Marketers Promise Miracles?

Advertising leads us to believe that products have magical properties; the things we buy will transform our lives. We will be beautiful, successful, perhaps even live forever. In this respect, advertising functions as mythology does in primitive societies: It provides simple, anxiety-reducing answers to complex problems.

A Response. *Marketers simply do not know enough about people to manipulate them.* Consider that the failure rate for new products ranges from 40 to 80 percent. Although people think that advertisers have an endless source of magical tricks and scientific techniques to manipulate them, in reality the industry is successful when it tries to sell good products and unsuccessful when it sells poor ones.[12]

OBJECTIVE 2-2
Marketers have an obligation to provide safe and functional products as part of their business activities.

Consumers' Rights and Product Satisfaction

Fifty-four million dollars for a pair of missing pants? A judge in Washington, D.C., made headlines a decade ago when he filed a $54 million lawsuit against his neighborhood dry cleaner because it lost a pair of his pinstriped suit pants. He claimed that a local consumer protection law entitled him to thousands of dollars for each day over nearly four years in which signs at the shop promised "same day service" and "satisfaction guaranteed." The suit dragged on for several months, but at the end of the day the plaintiff went home with empty pockets.[14] And some people claim we have too many lawsuits in this country!

If you're not happy with a product or service, what can you do about it? You have three possible courses of action (though sometimes you can take more than one):[15]

1. **Voice response**—You can appeal directly to the retailer for redress (e.g., a refund).
2. **Private response**—You can express your dissatisfaction to friends and boycott the product or the store where you bought it.
3. **Third-party response**—Like the pantsless judge, you can take legal action against the merchant, register a complaint with the Better Business Bureau, or write a letter to the newspaper. These comments can be effective, especially when others join in. Cover Girl ran an advertising campaign targeted at female football fans that depicted a model wearing a Baltimore Ravens jersey with the tagline, "Get Your Game Face On." At about the same time, a prominent Ravens player made headlines in a series of allegations about NFL players who physically abused their wives and girlfriends. Protestors went online and altered the ad to make it look like the model had a black eye.[16] When enough people band together to express negative **marketplace sentiments** through activist organizations such as Greenpeace or in social media mass protests such as the one Cover Girl ran into, dramatic changes can result.[17]

In one study, business majors wrote complaint letters to companies. When the firm sent a free sample in response, this action significantly improved how the students felt

The Tangled Web

From ihatestarbucks.com to boycottwalmart.meetup.com/, irritated customers have launched hundreds of gripe sites to air their grievances against companies. The practice is so widespread that some firms proactively buy unflattering domain names to keep other people from buying them. Xerox, for example, registered xeroxstinks.com, xeroxcorporationsucks.com, and ihatexerox.net. About 20,000 domain names end in "sucks.com." About one-third of these sites are registered to none other than the companies they slam: owners include Walmart Stores, Coca-Cola, Toys "R" Us, Target, and Whole Foods Market.[13]

about it. This didn't happen, however, when they *only* received a letter of apology—but no swag. Even worse, students who got no response reported an even more negative image than before. This shows that *any* kind of response is better than none.[18]

A number of factors influence which route we choose. People are more likely to take action if they're dissatisfied with expensive products such as household durables, cars, and clothing than for problems with inexpensive products.[19] Ironically, consumers who are satisfied with a store in general are *more* likely to complain if they experience something bad; they take the time to complain because they feel connected to the store. And, if a company resolves the problem, customers feel even better about it than if they hadn't complained in the first place![20] The moral: Although nobody likes criticism, organizations should encourage people to complain for these reasons:



Mass protests can sometimes bring about change.
Source: ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy Stock Photo.

1. They get the chance to correct the situation.
2. They will avoid an escalating problem that results when consumers take to social media to let others know they've been treated badly. People are more likely to spread the word about unresolved negative experiences to their friends than they are to boast about positive occurrences.
3. They collect valuable insights about customers' experiences that will (hopefully) help them to improve for future customers.
4. If consumers do not believe that the store will respond to their complaint, they will be more likely to simply switch than fight as they just take their business elsewhere.

Companies that score high in customer satisfaction often benefit from a big competitive advantage—especially when so many firms skimp on the attention they pay to customers. A five-year study of customer satisfaction in the Canadian banking industry provides typical results: Banks that provided better service commanded a larger "share of wallet" than did others (i.e., their customers entrusted them with a larger proportion of their money).[21]

Even so, more than half of the chief marketing officers (CMOs) who participated in a large survey reported that their companies *do not reward their employees* if customer satisfaction improves. More than one-third said they have no way to track word-of-mouth among customers, and fewer than three in ten said their firms are good at resolving customers' complaints.[22] What is wrong with this picture?



Consumers get creative when they want to vent their feelings about companies they don't like.
Source: Michael Matthews/Alamy Stock Photo.

When a product doesn't work as we expect or turns out to be unsafe (like the spate of hazardous products from China, ranging from toothpaste to dog food), it's the understatement of the year to say we're not satisfied. In these situations, marketers must immediately take steps to reassure us, or they risk losing a customer for life. If the company confronts the problem truthfully, we are often willing to forgive and forget. But if the firm seems to be dragging its heels or covering up, our resentment grows. This is what happened during the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico or during the infamous "Poop Cruise," when a disabled Carnival cruise ship sat at sea while 4,200 passengers and crew suffered through five days with no plumbing or electricity, and little food, under the glare of an unrelenting media spotlight.[23]

Market Regulation

The subprime mortgage meltdown that led to the collapse of major investment banking and insurance companies such as Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, and AIG, as well as triggering the Great Recession of 2008 (and beyond), illustrates why many people look to governments and industry watchdogs to provide oversight and regulation rather than relying strictly on businesses to police themselves. Some members of the business community regard this level of government oversight as excessive, and the Trump administration has aggressively unraveled many rules that relate to product safety and the environment.[24] Still, concern for the welfare of consumers has been an issue since at least the beginning of the 20th century, and activists continue to voice concerns about a range of issues such as child labor, exploitative advertising, and genetically engineered food.[25]

Partly as a result of consumers' efforts, the U.S. government established many federal agencies to oversee consumer-related activities. These include the Department of Agriculture, the Federal Trade Commission, the Food and Drug Administration, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the EPA. After Upton Sinclair's 1906 book *The Jungle* exposed the awful conditions in the Chicago meatpacking industry, Congress was prompted to pass important pieces of legislation—the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906 and the Federal Meat Inspection Act a year later—to protect consumers. A summary of some important consumer legislation enacted since that time appears in Table 2.1. You can find other information about consumer-related issues at consumerreports.org and cpsc.gov (the Consumer Product Safety Commission).

TABLE 2.1 Sample of Federal Legislation to Enhance Consumers' Welfare

Year	Act	Purpose
1953	Flammable Fabrics Act	Prohibits the transportation of flammable fabrics across state lines.
1958	National Traffic and Safety Act	Creates safety standards for cars and tires.
1958	Automobile Information Disclosure Act	Requires automobile manufacturers to post suggested retail prices on new cars.
1966	Fair Packaging and Labeling Act	Regulates packaging and labeling of consumer products. (Manufacturers must provide information about package contents and origin.)
1966	Child Protection Act	Prohibits sale of dangerous toys and other items.
1967	Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act	Requires cigarette packages to carry a warning label from the Surgeon General.
1968	Truth-in-Lending Act	Requires lenders to divulge the true costs of a credit transaction.

Year	Act	Purpose
1969	National Environmental Policy Act	Established a national environmental policy and created the Council on Environmental Quality to monitor the effects of products on the environment.
1972	Consumer Products Safety Act	Established the Consumer Product Safety Commission to identify unsafe products, establish safety standards, recall defective products, and ban dangerous products.
1975	Consumer Goods Pricing Act	Bans the use of price maintenance agreements among manufacturers and resellers.
1975	Magnuson-Moss Warranty-Improvement Act	Creates disclosure standards for consumer product warranties and allows the Federal Trade Commission to set policy regarding unfair or deceptive practices.
1990	The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act	Reaffirms the legal basis for the Food and Drug Administration's new rules on food labeling and established a timetable for the implementation of those rules.
1998	Internet Tax Freedom Act	Established a moratorium on special taxation of the internet, including taxation of access fees paid to America Online and other Internet Service Providers.
2010	Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act	Prompted by the recession that began in 2008, intends to promote the financial stability of the United States by improving accountability and transparency in the financial system, to end "too big to fail," to protect the American taxpayer by ending bailouts, and to protect consumers from abusive financial services practices. The Trump Administration is working to repeal this Act.
2016	Consumer Review Fairness Act of 2016	Passed in response to a number of incidents where companies tries to stifle negative online user reviews by including a "gag clause" in a contract that threatens legal action or monetary damages when customers say bad things about the company. The bill allows the FCC and individual states to take action against companies that try this tactic.

TABLE 2.2 U.S. Regulatory Agencies and Responsibilities

Regulatory agency	Responsibilities
Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)	Protects the public from potentially hazardous products. Through regulation and testing programs, the CPSC helps firms make sure their products won't harm customers.
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Develops and enforces regulations aimed at protecting the environment. Such regulations have a major impact on the materials and processes that manufacturers use in their products and thus on the ability of companies to develop products.
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	Regulates telephone, radio, and television. FCC regulations directly affect the marketing activities of companies in the communications industries, and they have an indirect effect on all firms that use broadcast media for marketing communications.
Federal Trade Commission (FTC)	Enforces laws against deceptive advertising and product labeling regulations. Marketers must constantly keep abreast of changes in FTC regulations to avoid costly fines.
Food and Drug Administration (FDA)	Enforces laws and regulations on foods, drugs, cosmetics, and veterinary products. Marketers of pharmaceuticals, over-the-counter medicines, and a variety of other products must get FDA approval before they can introduce products to the market.
Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC)	Regulates interstate bus, truck, rail, and water operations. The ability of a firm to efficiently move products to its customers depends on ICC policies and regulation.

Table 2.2 lists major U.S. regulatory agencies and what they do. One of the most important ones for consumers is the Food and Drug Administration (FDA); it polices advertising claims as well as the contents of edible products and pharmaceuticals. For example, as part of an FDA crackdown on consumer drug advertising, Bayer Health-Care Pharmaceuticals launched a $20 million **corrective advertising** campaign for Yaz, the most popular birth control pill in the United States. This term means that the

company must inform consumers that previous messages were wrong or misleading. The TV commercials, which ran during prime-time shows such as *Grey's Anatomy* and on cable networks, warned that nobody should take Yaz hoping that it will also cure pimples or premenstrual syndrome. Bayer was required to run these ads to correct previous messages after regulators decided the earlier ads overstated the drug's ability to improve women's moods and clear up acne.[26]

Advertisers, retailers, and manufacturers typically try to police themselves to ensure that their messages and products are not harmful or inaccurate. In addition to good intentions, they have a practical reason to do so: They don't want governments to do it for them. Indeed, sometimes these efforts even seem to go a bit over the top. Consider, for example, a ruling by the National Advertising Division (NAD) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, which is one of these industry watchdogs. Acting on a complaint by rival Kimberly-Clark, P&G must add little flecks of cartoon toilet paper to the backsides of its Charmin cartoon bears in future ads for its toilet paper. Although P&G supported its claim that Charmin leaves "fewer pieces behind" than the Cottonelle brand (and showed the results of its test on the brand's website), the NAD decided that the test "did not accurately reflect the results consumers normally see and experience."[27]

Consumerism

"Absolut Impotence." So reads a parody of a vodka ad created by Adbusters, a nonprofit organization that advocates for "the new social activist movement of the information age." The editor of the group's magazine argues that America is no longer a country, but rather a multitrillion-dollar brand subverted by corporate agendas. He claims that "America™" is no different from McDonald's, Marlboro, or General Motors.

Adbusters sponsors numerous initiatives, including *Buy Nothing Day* and *TV Turnoff Week*, that try to discourage rampant commercialism. These efforts, along with biting ads and commercials that lampoon advertising messages, are examples of **culture jamming**, which is a strategy to disrupt efforts by the corporate world to dominate our cultural landscape. The movement believes that "culture jamming" will change the way information flows; the way institutions wield power; the way TV stations are run; and the way the food, fashion, automobile, sports, music, and culture industries set their agendas.[28]

Although some in corporate America may dismiss these extreme sentiments as the ravings of a lunatic fringe, their proponents deserve to be taken seriously. The scandals involving such corporate icons as BP, AIG, Enron, Martha Stewart, Arthur Andersen, Bear Stearns, and massive product recalls from companies such as General Motors and Blue Bell Creameries fueled a growing bonfire of mistrust and skepticism among the consuming public.

President John F. Kennedy ushered in the modern era of consumerism with his "Declaration of Consumer Rights" in 1962. These include the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to redress, and the right to choice. The 1960s and 1970s were a time of consumer activism as consumers began to organize to demand better-quality products (and to boycott companies that did not provide them).

The publication of books such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962, which attacked the irresponsible use of pesticides, and Ralph Nader's *Unsafe at Any Speed* in 1965, which exposed safety defects in General Motors' Corvair automobile, prompted these movements. Many people have a vigorous interest in consumer-related issues, ranging from environmental concerns such as global warming and climate change, toxic waste, and so on, to excessive violence and sex on television or in the lyrics of

popular rock and rap songs like Robin Thicke's controversial *Blurred Lines* music video that some people interpreted as encouraging rape. Indeed, after a public outcry Reebok had to drop the rapper Rick Ross from its endorsement roster after he released a song about spiking a woman's drink with the drug MDMA, also referred to as ecstasy or molly.[29]

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The evidence is clear that a brand's philanthropic activities can influence shopper behavior and ultimately purchase decisions. Consumers are especially interested in choosing brands that support causes they find personally relevant. These causes include medical cures and disease prevention, social change, faith-based initiatives, and animal and child welfare.[31]

As a reaction to these feelings, many firms today try to integrate **corporate social responsibility (CSR)** into their business models. CSR describes processes that encourage the organization to make a positive impact on the various stakeholders in its community including consumers, employees, and the environment. For example, the shoe company TOMS is well-known for its promise to give a needy child a pair of shoes for every pair it sells.

Transformative Consumer Research

Indeed, some consumer researchers are themselves organizing, not only to study but also to rectify what they see as pressing social problems in the marketplace. This perspective is called *participatory action research (PAR)* or **transformative consumer research (TCR)**. It promotes research projects that include the goal of helping people or bringing about social change. Scientists who subscribe to this perspective view consumers as collaborators who work with them to realize this change rather than as a "phenomenon" on which to conduct research. Adherents of TCR work with at-risk populations, such as children, the disadvantaged, and the disabled, or on such topics as materialism, consumption of dangerous products, and compulsive consumption.[32]

Social Marketing

As the emerging TCR perspective shows, the field of consumer behavior can help to improve our lives as consumers. **Social marketing** strategies use the techniques that marketers normally employ to sell beer or detergent to encourage positive behaviors such as increased literacy and to discourage negative activities such as drunk driving.[33] Many researchers help to evaluate or create public policies to ensure that products are labeled accurately, to certify that people can comprehend important information in advertising messages, or to prevent children from being exploited by program-length toy commercials that masquerade as television shows.

CSR is more than a nice idea; it's also good business. Consumer research convincingly shows that, when all other things are equal, people are likely to choose a brand that gives back to the community. **Cause marketing** is a popular strategy that aligns a company or brand with a cause to generate business and societal benefits. Indeed, one survey reported that three out of five consumers bought a product or service in the previous year because of its association with a cause. An executive observed, "As a whole, Americans do have a heightened sensitivity to how they can help make a difference."[34]

Marketing Pitfall

When an organization wants to encourage people to contribute to its cause in some way, it seems like a good idea to provide an initial token display of support such as wearing a T-shirt, signing a petition, or asking them to join a Facebook group. Makes sense, right? Not necessarily. Some critics are worried about the phenomenon they term **slacktivism**; small and relatively meaningless expressions of support for important causes such as liking a charity on Facebook that substitute for donations or volunteering. One study found that if the initial display is visible to others, this public behavior can actually *reduce* the likelihood that the person will contribute beyond that. Under some circumstances the need to make a positive impression on others is satisfied by the public display, so the person exhibits slacktivism and doesn't bother to do anything else to support the cause.[30]

OBJECTIVE 2-3
Consumer behavior impacts directly on major public policy issues that confront our society.

Major Policy Issues Relevant to Consumer Behavior

It's hard to divorce consumer behavior from most of what goes on around us. The field intersects with many of the big issues we read about and debate every day. These range from human rights and humane working conditions to the safety of what we eat, the future of our environment, and our relationships with governments, corporations, and other organizations. In this section, we'll introduce three major issues—without pretending to cover *all* of the important ones.

Data Privacy and Identity Theft

A Carnegie Mellon professor demonstrated just how easy it is to find people online if you know what you're doing. In one study he showed that it was possible to deduce portions of a person's Social Security Number from nothing but a photograph posted online.[35] The failure of social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter to police "fake news" content such as ads that Russians purchased to influence the 2016 presidential election prompt many to reconsider how "free" information should be.

Other technologies also threaten our privacy even while they make marketing efforts more efficient. Facebook introduced a "Tag Suggestions" feature that uses facial recognition to identify a user's friends in photos he or she uploads, and automatically suggests nametags for them. Other programs like Picasa also incorporate facial recognition technology. This handy little tool removes the need to keep typing the same friends' names into photo albums. But is there a dark side to this capability? Because facial recognition analyzes and stores people's unique facial measurements, it may come with some serious privacy risks. For example, in the near future it will be possible for marketers to identify people as they walk down the street—and link their faces to relevant information such as credit scores or medical records. Some firms already offer smart billboards that detect the gender and age of a passerby and show that person relevant ad messages. For now these boards don't analyze emotions or other personal characteristics, but what if they could detect a feeling like sadness and offer the person a message about antidepressants?[36]

One of the biggest ethical issues many marketers face today relates to how much they can—or should—know about their customers. Virtually anyone who surfs the internet or who carries a cell phone (especially a smartphone with GPS capability) shares reams of personal information with all sorts of companies (whether they know it or not).

Clearly, we all benefit from technologies that allow companies to precisely tailor their messages to our needs based on the product information we look for. Indeed, industry researchers report that a lot of people actually don't mind the ads if they are personally relevant.[37] But some consumer advocates argue that we pay a high cost for this convenience. As the director of one consumer group phrased it in a complaint to the Federal Trade Commission, "Online consumers are being bought and sold like chattel."[38]

Are we for sale? In some sense, yes. If you go on the internet (and who doesn't today?), it's likely that someone is carefully tracking your clicks—the search items you Google, the sites you visit, perhaps even the comments you post on Facebook.

Your digital actions have actual financial value, because of the industry called **real-time bidding**; an electronic trading system that sells ad space on the webpages people click on at the moment they visit them.

In the early days of the internet, advertisers simply bought space on sites that generally matched the demographics of their target audience. Then they showed the same ad to everyone who came to the site—an inefficient approach people in the industry call "spray and pray." Today that picture has changed as companies develop complex algorithms that predict where consumers with specific profiles (e.g., "Asian Americans who make more than $100,000 a year, live in Los Angeles, and are in the market for a luxury car") will visit and serve up precisely tailored messages to these customers. By the way, these are not "live auctions" like you might see on eBay; they are conducted automatically on powerful computers that receive several million bids every second. Each auction typically takes less than 30 milliseconds. And because not all customers are as likely to buy or to spend as much as are others, these algorithms attach different values to them so higher value customers command higher auction prices. As the CEO of one of these trading companies explained, "The first impression seen by a high-value person on the opening page of a major newspaper first thing in the morning has a different value than a user from China who is 12 and has been on the Web all day long playing games." The **real-time bidding** business is growing rapidly: Analysts estimate that by 2018, the U.S. market alone will reach more than $12 billion.[39]

Identity theft occurs when someone steals your personal information and uses it without your permission. They may charge items on a credit card or perhaps access medical services via your health benefits. Identity theft is the most common consumer complaint, according to the Federal Trade Commission. It accounts for almost 20 percent of all problems consumers report.[40] Experts estimate that over 15 million Americans fall victim to identity theft each year, with financial losses exceeding $50 billion. That's about one in 16 adults! And, as any victim knows, the financial aspects are not the only pain points because cancelling credit cards or otherwise correcting the situation can result in huge hassles.[41]

Identity thieves get more sophisticated every day. They used to be content with stealing wallets and "dumpster diving" to obtain account numbers. Today, we increasingly fall prey to high-tech **phishing** scams in which people receive fraudulent emails that ask them to supply account information, as well as **botnets** (a set of computers that are penetrated by malicious software known as *malware* that allows an external agent to control their actions) that hijack millions of computers without any trace. Data breaches at major companies such as Equifax, Yahoo!, Target, Sony Pictures, and even NASA continue to worry many people.[42]

Locational privacy is a related issue. Every one of us who walks around with a phone transmits his or her approximate location, and those of us with GPS-enabled phones leave nothing to chance. In addition, many cars now have GPS devices that can share their location with a centralized service. We can purchase GPS trackers to keep tabs on our kids, aged relatives, or wayward pets. Some insurance companies offer steep discounts to drivers who use GPS tracking technology. The companies provide a small tracker in the car that reports driving habits and in some cases even whether the driver is cruising through unsafe neighborhoods. Other services allow anxious parents to track a teenager's driving and provide a "report card" on use of the family car.[43] A school district in Brazil goes a step farther: It requires 20,000 grade school students to wear uniforms embedded with GPS chips similar to those used in pet trackers. The chips automatically send parents a text message as soon as their children enter the school grounds, or if their children are more than 20 minutes late. A Texas school

district implemented a similar plan though it later abandoned the idea and decided to install surveillance cameras on high school campuses instead.[44]

For all intents and purposes in today's wired world, consumers can run, but we can't hide: If someone wants to know where we are or where we've been, the data are there for the asking. As with web tracking, there is value here: We can easily identify by looking at hundreds or even thousands of reviews the best sushi place within a block of our current location, or perhaps get a heads up on that policeman with the radar gun who is hiding behind that billboard up the highway. However, this is a mixed blessing if this information gets into the wrong hands. Consumers need to make tough tradeoffs between convenience and constant surveillance.

Market Access

Many of us take for granted that we are free to shop anywhere we want or that we can easily learn about our purchase options—everything we need is just a click of a mouse away, right? In reality, however, large numbers of people can't make this claim. For one reason or another their **market access** (i.e., their ability to find and purchase goods and services) is limited because of physical, mental, economic, or social barriers.

Disabilities

Disabled people are the largest minority market in the United States. One in five U.S. adults lives with a disability that interferes with daily life.[45] The Census Bureau reports that there are 54 million adults with disabilities who spend almost $200 billion annually, yet companies pay remarkably little attention to the unique needs of this vast group. Fully 11 million U.S. adults have a condition that makes it difficult for them to leave home to shop, so they rely almost exclusively on catalogs and the internet to purchase products. Many people have limited mobility and are unable to gain easy access to stores, entertainment venues, educational institutions, and other locations. Bodily limitations or disfigurements may result in real or imagined stigmatization, so self-concept and interpersonal relationships may be problematic.[46] People who rely on wheelchairs for mobility often encounter barriers when they try to enter stores, move around the aisles, or enter dressing rooms that are too narrow to accommodate a chair. Others have mental illnesses, such as excessive anxiety in public places. These issues touch many of us; for example, 15 percent of Vietnam and 1991 Gulf War veterans have been diagnosed with *post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)*, and 20 percent of veterans who served in Afghanistan and Iraq have received care at a Veterans' Administration (VA) facility for the disorder since their return home. Large numbers of children also encounter difficulties with market access, whether offline or online.

The good news is that technology holds the potential to improve market access. Here are a few exciting new developments:

- The touch screen is a breakthrough for people who have problems with motor skills. They no longer need to manipulate a mouse, keyboard, or pen to use programs. A device like the iPad makes *touch-to-speak technology* affordable and easy to use. For example, a person who is unable to speak can communicate his or her preferences for meals, activities, and so on just by touching the screen. Other apps amplify sounds for the hard of hearing, or even encourage children with motor skills disabilities to engage in physical therapy.[47] The LookTel Money Reader app makes it possible for blind people to pay for

products in cash; it can "read money" and tell the person the value of the bills he or she holds.[48]

- Dating websites for singles with health problems allow people with an array of disabilities, including paralysis and multiple sclerosis, to find partners. Dating 4 Disabled caters to people with physical diseases, while NoLongerLonely focuses on those with mental illness. Sites like these and others allow users to be blunt and honest about their own issues and what they seek in a partner. One site was created by a man whose brother suffered from Crohn's disease. He observed, "He was a good-looking boy, but when do you tell a girl that you have a colostomy bag? The first date? The third? There's no good time."[49]
- As the number of people using wheelchairs grows by over two million per year in the United States alone, the market for **adaptive clothing** that provides a broader range of apparel options grows as well. The designer Tommy Hilfiger launched a children's collection that includes modified closures, adjustability, and alternate options for getting into and out of the garments.[50]

Food Deserts

The Department of Agriculture defines a **food desert** as a census tract where 33 percent of the population or 500 people, whichever is less, live more than a mile from a grocery store in an urban area or more than 10 miles away in a rural area. Healthy food options in these communities are hard to find or are unaffordable. Researchers estimate that in the United States about 23.5 million people live in food deserts.



Some designers are jumping into the growing market for adaptive clothing. *Source:* ITAR-TASS News Agency/Alamy Stock Photo.

Limited access to healthy choices can lead to poor diets and higher levels of obesity and other diet-related diseases. More broadly, this *food insecurity* increases the number of low- and moderate-income families who struggle to purchase the diet they need to sustain a healthy and active life.[51]

Literacy

Media literacy refers to a consumer's ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate information in a variety of forms, including print and nonprint messages.[54]

Media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language, and sound. This movement reminds us that we are bombarded with thousands of messages every day that espouse a particular point of view or try to persuade us to buy this or that. It's our job to critically evaluate this information and not everyone has the skills to do that. This task is even more difficult in the age of Google, where many of us assume that whatever comes up in a Google search or on Wikipedia is completely true and accurate (Hint: not by a long shot). As the tried-but-true phrase says, "*Caveat Emptor*"—let the buyer beware!

Unfortunately, some of us have an even bigger problem than evaluating the source of a message: We can't read it in the first place. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that about one in seven U.S. adults are **functionally illiterate**.[55] This term describes a person whose reading skills are not adequate to carry out everyday tasks, such as reading the newspaper or the instructions on a pill bottle. Almost half of people in the United States read below a sixth-grade level.

This limitation impedes market access for a couple of reasons: First, the illiterate or "low-literate" consumer is at a disadvantage because he or she encounters difficulty in learning about the best purchase options. Second, this person may experience feelings of shame and embarrassment and avoid market situations where he or she will be forced to reveal the inability to read a label or other written material.[56] Some of these people (whom researchers term *social isolates*) cope with the stigma of illiteracy by avoiding situations in which they will have to reveal this problem. They may choose not to eat at a restaurant with an unfamiliar menu, for example.

Low-literate consumers rely heavily on visual cues, including brand logos and store layouts, to navigate in retail settings, but they often make mistakes when they select similarly packaged products (for example, brand line extensions). They also encounter problems with *numeracy* (understanding numbers); many low-literate people have difficulty knowing, for example, whether they have enough money to purchase the items in their cart and unethical merchants may cheat them out of the correct amount of change. Not surprisingly, these challenges create an emotional burden for low-literate consumers, who experience stress, anxiety, fear, shame, and other negative emotions before, during, and after they shop.[57]

Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship

Almost everyone today is concerned about saving our planet. Worries about climate change, entire species going extinct, widespread exposure to carcinogens and harmful bacteria, and many other issues are front and center. The consumer's focus on personal health is merging with a growing interest in global health. Some analysts call this new value **conscientious consumerism**.[58]

A *sustainable business model* is not just about "do-gooder" efforts that reduce a company's carbon footprint or the amount of plastic that goes into landfills. Indeed, about six out of every ten companies that convert to a sustainable business model

Marketing Pitfall

At both ends of the income spectrum, consumers are seeking healthier food that is locally produced in order to reduce the high carbon footprint that results from extended shipping. We see a growing demand for so-called **superfoods** like certain fruits, nuts, and seaweeds that are "calorie sparse and nutrient dense" in order to maximize the bang for the buck, nutritionally speaking.[52] Sometimes we run into problems despite the best of intentions. For example, it turns out that those plastic water bottles that people tote around instead of sipping "calorie dense and nutrient sparse" soda aren't so great after all. Although we may benefit from drinking water instead of sugary beverages, by one estimate the energy (and subsequent climate change) used in the production of these containers is equivalent to filling them one-quarter full with oil. In addition the bottles may be transported thousands of miles on gas-guzzling cargo ships, and then the discarded bottles can take thousands of years to decompose.[53] Recently it has been discovered that the water itself may contain microbits of plastic from the bottle.

report that they have profited financially as well.[59] A **triple bottom-line orientation** refers to business strategies that strive to maximize return in three ways:

1 **The financial bottom line:** Provide profits to stakeholders.
2 **The social bottom line:** Return benefits to the communities where the organization operates.
3 **The environmental bottom line:** Minimize damage to the environment or even improve natural conditions.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines the concept this way: "**Sustainability** is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations."[60] Some people refer to this way of thinking as *cradle to cradle*; the target to aim for is a product made from natural materials that is fully reusable or recyclable so that the company actually uses zero resources to make it.

That is a tough goal, but many organizations work hard to get as close to it as they can—and consumers increasingly take notice. Many of us are much more mindful of these issues when we shop and when we make decisions about the foods we eat, the clothes we wear, the buildings in which we live and work, and the cars we drive. Various surveys conducted recently show that roughly half or more Americans want to buy eco-friendly products. This preference is much stronger among young consumers, where 90 percent say they look at a manufacturer's reputation for sustainability. And this focus pays off for companies that are listening: Unilever's portfolio of 18 "sustainable living" brands are growing 50 percent faster than its other brands.[61]

Because sustainability and related issues such as climate change, pollution, and toxic products are so pervasive, it is important to distinguish this term from another widely used buzzword: **Green marketing** describes a strategy that involves the development and promotion of environmentally friendly products and stressing



Airinum is one company that is tapping into a desire for functional yet stylish protective wear as concerns grow about the effects of air pollution on consumers' health.
Source: Photo by Alexander Bello for Airinum www.airinum.com. Copyright Airinum AB.



A Ford ad in Brazil promotes conservation.
Source: Courtesy of J. Walter Thompson Publicidade LTDA.

this attribute when the manufacturer communicates with customers. Although some specialized companies such as Seventh Generation have successfully built a following around their green products, this strategy has not fared well in recent years. Nonetheless, there still is demand for environmentally friendly products: U.S. consumers spend more than $40 billion a year on them. This estimate includes $29.2 billion for organic food; more than $10 billion for hybrid, electric, and clean-diesel vehicles; more than $2 billion on energy-efficient light bulbs; and $640 million on green cleaning products.[62] However, sales are flat or lower than in prior years.

Why would this be? We know that consumers increasingly pay more attention to environmental issues, and many even say they will pay more for products that manufacturers produce under ethical conditions (e.g., in humane workplaces and without harmful chemicals). In one typical study, the researchers gave subjects a description of a coffee company that either used or did not use Fair Trade principles to buy its beans. They found that participants were willing to pay an additional $1.40 for a pound of the coffee if it was ethically sourced and were negative about the company if it did not adhere to these principles. The study obtained similar results for shirts that were made with organic cotton.[63]

Still—as we'll see in more detail in Chapter 8—it is common to witness a disconnect between consumers' attitudes and their actual behavior. As the old saying goes, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." Despite consumers' best



"We consume, but at what price? Let's become human again. Please donate." Ad for a Belgian NGO (non-governmental organization) condemning food industry practices such as the feeding of Thai prawns with poison.
Source: Christophe Gilbert/Marine Vincent & Pierre Jadot.

intentions to "buy green," we can point to two major reasons for the gap between saying and doing:

First, green products are more expensive because the ingredients tend to cost more than their more conventional counterparts, and transportation costs are higher too because they are sold in smaller volumes than the big brands. Although many consumers profess a desire to buy environmentally friendly products, especially in tough economic times they have a tendency not to back these preferences with their cash. When the Great Recession hit in 2008, it took a lot of the steam out of the green movement. For example, in 2009, S.C. Johnson introduced a line of green products called Nature's Source and the company spent more than $25 million to advertise them. By 2010 the company slashed the line's advertising budget to zero.[64]



This ad from The Slovak Republic underscores the growing priority consumers place upon organic foods.
Source: JANDL marketing a reklama, S.R.O.

Unfortunately, the second reason for the lackluster showing of green products is largely self-inflicted. **Greenwashing** occurs when companies make false or exaggerated claims about how environmentally friendly their products are. Think about the old story of the "boy who cried wolf": Consumers simply don't believe most of the green claims companies make about their brands. Almost one-fourth of U.S. consumers say they have "no way of knowing" if a product is green or actually does what it claims. Their skepticism is probably justified: According to one report, more than 95 percent of consumer companies that market as "green" make misleading or inaccurate claims. Another survey found that the number of products that claim to be green has increased by 73 percent since 2009—but of the products investigated, almost one-third had fake labels, and 70% made green claims without offering any proof to back them up.[65] One survey reported that 71 percent of respondents say they will stop buying a product if they feel they've been misled about its environmental impact, and 37 percent are so angry about greenwashing that they believe this justifies a complete boycott of everything the company makes.[66] Greenwashing has impacted many well-known companies. In 2017, Walmart agreed to pay $1 million to settle claims that allege the nation's largest retailer sold plastic products it misleadingly labeled "biodegradable" or "compostable" in violation of California law.[67]

How can we motivate consumers to practice what they preach? A recent study of more than 2,000 hotel guests suggests that simply allowing consumers to pledge to practice sustainable behaviors increases the likelihood they will follow through. When guests made a specific commitment at check-in to hang their towels for reuse to reduce laundry waste (and received a lapel pin to symbolize their commitment), the number of towels actually hung increased by more than 40 percent. The researchers estimated the savings at one hotel at over $50,000 and nearly 700,000 gallons of water.[68]

As we saw in Chapter 1, it is typical to find that a relatively small number of consumers account for a large amount of the action with regard to a certain consumption activity or purchase. This certainly is true when we look at people who walk the walk, in addition to talking the talk, about modifying their behaviors to help

the environment. Marketers point to a segment of consumers they call **LOHAS**—an acronym for "lifestyles of health and sustainability." This label refers to people who worry about the environment, want products to be produced in a sustainable way, and spend money to advance what they see as their personal development and potential. These so-called "Lohasians" (others refer to this segment as *cultural creatives*) represent a great market for products such as organic foods, energy-efficient appliances, and hybrid cars, as well as alternative medicine, yoga tapes, and ecotourism. One organization that tracks this group estimates that they make up one in four adult Americans and spend about $290 billion per year on sustainable products and services.[69]

OBJECTIVE 2-4
Consumer behavior can be harmful to individuals and to society.

The Dark Side of Consumer Behavior

A few years ago a crowd assembled for a big holiday sale at a Walmart store in New York. When the doors opened, the crowd trampled a temporary worker to death as people rushed to grab discounted merchandise off the store shelves. A lawsuit filed on behalf of the man's survivors claimed that in addition to providing inadequate security, the retailer "engaged in specific marketing and advertising techniques to specifically attract a large crowd and create an environment of frenzy and mayhem."[70] In subsequent years there have been additional incidents of trampling and even gunfire as people frantically jockey for position to scoop up the big sales. Just how far will people go to secure a bargain?

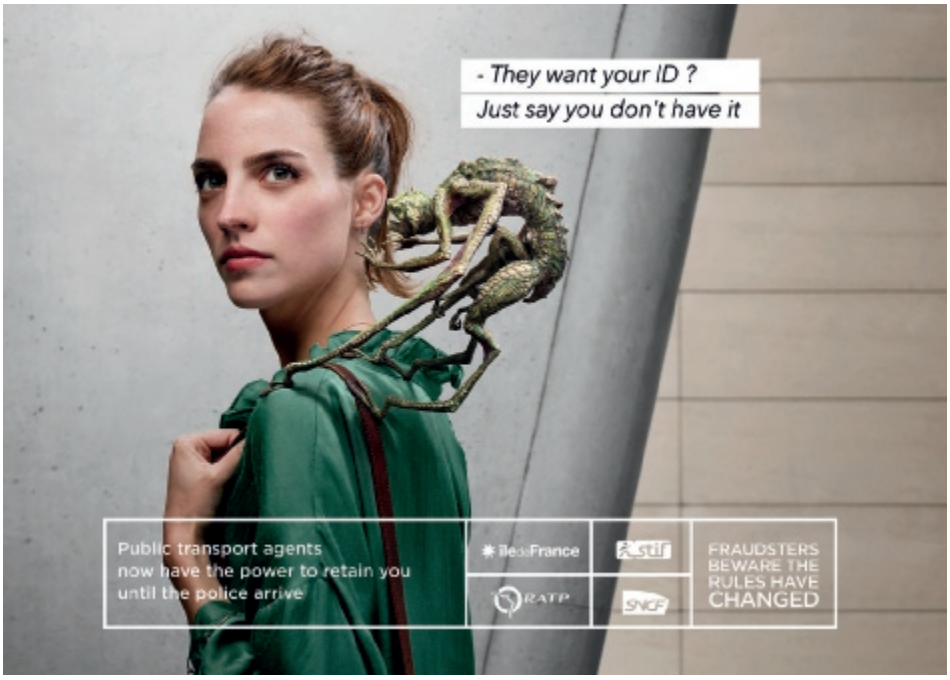
Despite the best efforts of researchers, government regulators, and concerned industry people, sometimes we are our own worst enemies. We think of individuals as rational decision makers, who calmly do their best to obtain products and services that will maximize the health and well-being of themselves, their families, and their society. In reality, however, consumers' desires, choices, and actions often result in negative consequences to individuals and the society in which they live.

Some of these actions are relatively benign, but others have more onerous consequences. Harmful consumer behaviors, such as excessive drinking or cigarette smoking, stem from social pressures. The cultural value many of us place on money encourages activities such as shoplifting and insurance fraud. Exposure to unattainable ideals of beauty and success creates dissatisfaction with our bodies or our achievements. We will touch on many of these issues later in this text, but for now, let's review some dimensions of the "dark side" of consumer behavior.

Consumer Terrorism

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 were a wake-up call to the free-enterprise system. They revealed the vulnerability of nonmilitary targets and reminded us that disruptions of our financial, electronic, and supply networks can potentially be more damaging to our way of life than the fallout from a conventional battlefield. Assessments by the Rand Corporation and other analysts point to the susceptibility of the nation's food supply as a potential target of **bioterrorism**.[71] More recently, many concerned policymakers, executives, and military commanders have added the prospect of **cyberterrorism** to the list of pressing concerns, especially in the light of high-profile attacks on the computer systems of large financial institutions such as Equifax.[72]

Even before the anthrax scares of 2001, toxic substances placed in products threatened to hold the marketplace hostage. This tactic first drew public attention in the United States in 1982, when seven people died after taking Tylenol pills that had



Identity fraud is part of the dark side of consumer behavior.
Source: Image courtesy Havas Paris; Chief Creative Officer: Christophe Coffre; Art Director: Catherine Labro; Copywriter: Sylvain Louradour; Photographer: NICK & CHLOÉ; 3D Illustrator: LES ILLUSIONS chez La manufacture; Actress: Agathe Zalasca (agent Céline)

been laced with cyanide. A decade later, Pepsi weathered its own crisis when more than 50 reports of syringes found in Diet Pepsi cans surfaced in 23 states. In that case, Pepsi pulled off a public relations *coup de grace* by convincing the public that the syringes could not have been introduced during the manufacturing process. The company even showed an in-store surveillance video that caught a customer slipping a syringe into a Diet Pepsi can while the cashier's head was turned.[73] Pepsi's aggressive actions underscore the importance of responding to such a crisis head-on and quickly.

Addictive Consumption

A woman in New Zealand apparently died from drinking too much Coca-Cola. Her family said she drank about 2.2 gallons of the beverage every day for years. Prior to her death she had several rotten teeth removed, and she gave birth to a baby who was born without any tooth enamel. The 31-year-old mother of eight died following a cardiac arrhythmia after consuming more than two pounds of sugar and 970 mg of caffeine a day. Coca-Cola noted that the coroner's report, while singling out its product as a probable cause of death, stated that the company "cannot be held responsible for the health of consumers who drink unhealthy quantities of the product."[74]

Though we usually equate substance abuse with addiction to alcohol, drugs, or nicotine, it seems we can become dependent on almost anything—there is even a Chapstick Addicts support group with 250 active members![75] **Consumer addiction** is a physiological or psychological dependency on products or services. Many companies profit from selling addictive products or from selling solutions for kicking a bad habit.

A Chinese man got so upset about the amount of time his adult son spent playing videogames that he took a novel approach: He hired "digital hit men" in the form of other gamers to kill off all of his son's characters in the games.[76] How is that for "tough love"? Psychologists compare **social media addiction** to chemical dependency, to the point of inducing symptoms of withdrawal when users are deprived of their fix. As one noted, "Everyone is a potential addict—they're just waiting for their drug of choice to come along, whether heroin, running, junk food, or social media."[77] In 2018, the World Health Organization classified "gaming disorder" as an official disease.[78]

Indeed, a survey reported one in three smartphone owners would rather give up sex than their phones![79] And, as many of us realize, this fixation grows by the "enablers" around us as they exhibit the same behavior. Indeed, one study documented that college students are much more likely to pull out their phones when someone with whom they were sitting had just done so.[80] Entrepreneurs are looking at novel ways to "detox" users. One designer created a series of "substitute phones" that help people put down the real thing.[81] They allow people to mimic real actions like swiping, zooming, and scrolling to wean users away. Maybe more of us need this kind of "intervention"—a Gallup survey reported that 41 percent of American smartphone owners check their phone every few minutes. Another survey found that 71 percent of Americans aged 18 and over sleep with their phones.[82] Oops, time for a fix?

Other problems arise when people become overly involved in playing online games or posting on social network sites:

- In the United Kingdom, a 33-year-old widowed mother let her two dogs starve to death and neglected her three kids after becoming hooked on the online game *Small World*. A judge banned her from going on the internet. The woman slept only two hours a night as she played the virtual reality game (in which dwarves and giants battle to conquer the world) almost nonstop for six months. Her children—aged 9, 10, and 13—had no hot food and "drank" cold baked beans from tins. When the family's two dogs died from neglect, she left their bodies rotting in the dining room for two months.[83]
- A U.S. woman pled guilty to a charge of second-degree murder in the death of her three-month-old son. The 22-year-old mother lost her temper when her child began crying while she was playing *FarmVille* on Facebook; she shook the baby until he died.
- **Cyberbullying** refers to the "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computer, cell phones, and other electronic devices."[84] One study reported that one in five middle school students in the United States were subject to cyberbullying. As one seventh-grade girl observed, "It's easier to fight online, because you feel more brave and in control. On Facebook, you can be as mean as you want."[85] The problem has gotten so bad that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services even has a website to combat it: Stopbullying.gov.[86]



A government website focuses on the problem of cyberbullying.
Source: StopBullying.gov, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

- **Phantom Vibration Syndrome** describes the tendency to habitually reach for your cell phone because you feel it vibrating, even if it is off or you are not even wearing it at the time. One researcher reports that 70 percent of people who report heavy usage of mobile devices say they experience this phenomenon. The name derives from *phantom limb syndrome*, a condition in which someone who has lost a limb experiences sensory hallucinations that it is still attached to the body and functioning.[87]

Compulsive Consumption

Some consumers take the expression "born to shop" quite literally. They shop because they are compelled to do so rather than because shopping is a pleasurable or functional task. **Compulsive consumption** refers to repetitive and often excessive shopping performed as an antidote to tension, anxiety, depression, or boredom.[88] "Shopaholics" turn to shopping much the way addicted people turn to drugs or alcohol.[89] One man diagnosed with *compulsive shopping disorder* (CSD) bought more than 2,000 wrenches and never used any of them. Therapists report that women clinically diagnosed with CSD outnumber men by four to one. They speculate that women are attracted to items such as clothes and cosmetics to enhance their interpersonal relationships, whereas men tend to focus on gadgetry, tools, and guns to achieve a sense of power.

One out of 20 U.S. adults is unable to control the buying of goods that he or she does not really want or need. Some researchers say compulsive shopping may be related to low self-esteem. It affects an estimated 2 to 16 percent of the adult U.S. population.[90] In some cases, the consumer has little or no control over his or her consumption, much like a drug addict. Even the act of shopping itself is an addicting experience for some people. Three common elements characterize many negative or destructive consumer behaviors:[91]

1. The behavior is not done by choice.
2. The gratification derived from the behavior is short-lived.
3. The person experiences strong feelings of regret or guilt afterward.

Gambling is an example of a consumption addiction that touches every segment of consumer society. Whether it takes the form of casino gambling, playing the "slots,"



A French organization combats the sexual abuse of children by online predators.
Source: Courtesy of Innocence en Danger.

betting on sports events with friends or through a bookie, or even buying lottery tickets, excessive gambling can be quite destructive. Taken to extremes, gambling can result in lowered self-esteem, debt, divorce, and neglected children. According to one psychologist, gamblers exhibit a classic addictive cycle: They experience a "high" while in action and depression when they stop gambling, which leads them back to the thrill of the action. Unlike drug addicts, however, money is the substance that hard-core gamblers abuse. We can probably expect the problem to grow as the movement to legalize online gambling in some U.S. states picks up steam (it already is legal in Nevada, Delaware, and New Jersey and at least eight other states are looking at it seriously).[92] There is a built-in market for this new format: Analysts estimate more than 170 million people play simulated casino games on social networks, more than triple the number of real money online gamblers.[93]

Consumed Consumers

Consumed consumers are people who are used or exploited, willingly or not, for commercial gain in the marketplace. Here are some examples:

- **Prostitutes**—Expenditures on prostitution in the United States alone are estimated at $20 billion annually. These revenues are equivalent to those in the domestic shoe industry.[94]
- **Organ, blood, and hair donors**—There is a lively global **red market** for body parts. By one estimate, you could make about $46 million if you donated every reusable part of your body (do not try this at home).[95] In the United States, millions of people sell their blood. A lively market also exists for organs (e.g., kidneys), and some women sell their hair to be made into wigs. Bidding for a human kidney on eBay went to more than $5.7 million before the company ended the auction (it's illegal to sell human organs online . . . at least so far). The seller wrote, "You can choose either kidney. . . . Of course only one for sale, as I need the other one to live. Serious bids only."[96] Here is the retail price for some typical red market transactions in the United States (often much cheaper elsewhere):[97]
  - A pint of blood: $337
  - Hair (for extensions): $308
  - Cornea: $24,400
  - Heart: $997,700
- **Babies for sale**—Several thousand surrogate mothers have been paid to be medically impregnated and carry babies to term for infertile couples. A fertile woman between the ages of 18 and 25 can "donate" one egg every three months and rake in $7,000 each time. Over eight years, that's 32 eggs for a total of $224,000.[98] In one case in Germany, police arrested a couple when they tried to auction their eight-month-old son on eBay. The parents claimed that the offer, which read "Baby—collection only. Offer my nearly new baby for sale because it cries too much. Male, 70 cm long" was just a joke.[99]

Illegal Acquisition and Product Use

In addition to being self-destructive or socially damaging, many consumer behaviors are illegal as well. Analysts estimate the cost of crimes that consumers commit against business at more than $40 billion per year. A survey the McCann-Erickson advertising agency conducted revealed the following tidbits:[100]

- Ninety-one percent of people say they lie regularly. One in three fibs about his or her weight, one in four about income, and 21 percent lie about their age. Nine percent even lie about their natural hair color.
- Four out of 10 Americans have tried to pad an insurance bill to cover the deductible.
- Nineteen percent say they've snuck into a theater to avoid paying admission.
- More than three out of five people say they've taken credit for making something from scratch when they have done no such thing. According to Pillsbury's CEO, this "behavior is so prevalent that we've named a category after it—speed scratch."

Consumer Theft and Fraud

Who among us has never received an email offering us fabulous riches if we help to recover a lost fortune from a Nigerian bank account? Of course, the only money changing hands will be yours if you fall for the pitch from a so-called *advance-fee fraud artist*. These con artists have successfully scammed many victims out of hundreds of millions of dollars. However, a small but intrepid group of "counterscammers" sometimes give these crooks a taste of their own medicine by pretending to fall for a scam and humiliating the perpetrator. One common strategy is to trick the con artist into posing for pictures while holding a self-mocking sign and then posting these photos on internet sites. Both online and offline, fraud is rampant.

Stealing from stores is the most common scam. Someone commits a retail theft every five seconds. **Shrinkage** is the industry term for inventory and cash losses from shoplifting and employee theft. This is a massive problem for businesses that gets passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices (about 40 percent of the losses can be attributed to employees rather than shoppers).

Indeed, shoplifting is fastest-growing crime in the United States. A comprehensive retail study found that shoplifting is a year-round problem that costs U.S. retailers $60 billion annually.[101] The most frequently products stolen are tobacco products, athletic shoes, logo and brand-name apparel, designer jeans, and undergarments.

And what about shoppers who commit fraud when they abuse stores' exchange and return policies? Some big companies such as Guess, Staples, and Sports Authority use new software that lets them track a shopper's track record of bringing items back. They are trying to crack down on **serial wardrobers** who buy an outfit, wear it once, and return it; customers who change price tags on items, then return one item for the higher amount; and shoppers who use fake or old receipts when they return a product. Retail analysts estimate that about $2 billion of merchandise that shoppers return after the holiday season alone is for fraudulent reasons.[102]

Counterfeiting, where companies or individuals sell fake versions of real products to customers (who may or may not be aware of the switch), accounts for more than $461 billion in global losses annually. Many of us think of counterfeiters as guys who sell *faux* designer handbags or watches on the street, but in fact the problem is much more widespread—and often deadly. About 200,000 people in China die per year because they ingest fake pharmaceuticals.[103]

Anticonsumption

Some types of destructive consumer behavior are **anticonsumption**; events in which people deliberately deface or mutilate products and services. Anticonsumption ranges from relatively mild acts like spray-painting graffiti on buildings and transit vehicles to serious incidences of product tampering or even the release of computer viruses that can bring large corporations to their knees. It can also take the form of political protest in which activists alter or destroy billboards and other advertisements that promote what they feel to be unhealthy or unethical acts.

For example, some members of the clergy in areas heavily populated by minorities have organized rallies to protest the proliferation of cigarette and alcohol advertising in their neighborhoods; these protests sometimes include the defacement of billboards promoting alcohol or cigarettes.

MyLab Marketing

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. **Ethical business is good business.**

   Business ethics are rules of conduct that guide actions in the marketplace; these are the standards against which most people in a culture judge what is right and what is wrong, good or bad. Marketers must confront many ethical issues, especially ones that relate to how much they make consumers "want" things they don't need or are not good for them. A related issue is materialism, which refers to the importance people attach to worldly possessions, and the role of business in encouraging this outlook.

2. **Marketers have an obligation to provide safe and functional products as part of their business activities.**

   It is both ethically and financially smart to maximize customer satisfaction. In some cases, external bodies such as the government or industry associations regulate businesses to ensure that their products and advertising are safe, clear, and accurate. Consumer behavior researchers may play a role in this process and those who do transformative consumer research (TCR) may even work to bring about social change. Companies also play a significant role in addressing social conditions through their corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices and social marketing campaigns that promote positive behaviors.

3. **Consumer behavior impacts directly on major public policy issues that confront our society.**

   Our relationships with companies and other organizations are complex and many issues that impact quality of life relate directly to marketing practices. These include the trade-off between our privacy and the ability of companies to tailor their offerings to our individual needs. Other issues revolve around market access because many people are unable to navigate the marketplace as a result of disabilities, illiteracy, or other conditions. In addition, our fragile environment requires a commitment to sustainable business practices that attempt to maximize the triple bottom-line that emphasizes financial, social, and environmental benefits.

4. **Consumer behavior can be harmful to individuals and to society.**

   Although textbooks often paint a picture of the consumer as a rational, informed decision maker, in reality many consumer activities are harmful to individuals or to society. The "dark side" of consumer behavior includes terrorism, addiction, the use of people as products (consumed consumers), and theft or vandalism (anticonsumption).

KEY TERMS

Adaptive clothing, 47
Anticonsumption, 58
Bioterrorism, 53
Botnets, 45
Business ethics, 34
Cause marketing, 43
Compulsive consumption, 56
Conscientious consumerism, 48
Consumed consumers, 57
Consumer addiction, 54
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Culture jamming, 42

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Sustainability, 49
Transformative consumer research (TCR), 43
Triple bottom-line orientation, 49

REVIEW

2-1 What are *business ethics*, and why is this an important topic?

2-2 The economics of information perspective argues that advertising is important. Why?

2-3 State two important criticisms of marketing and provide the pros and cons for each.

2-4 Give two examples of important legislation that relate to U.S. consumers.

2-5 Define *social marketing*, and give an example of this technique.

2-6 What is the primary difference between transformative consumer research and other kinds of consumer research?

2-7 Why is market access an important aspect of consumer well-being? What are some important reasons why consumers can experience limited market access?

2-8 What is *greenwashing*, and why is it a problem for marketers?

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

2-9 Internet addiction has been a big headache in South Korea for several years, where 90 percent of homes connect to cheap, high-speed broadband. Many young Koreans' social lives revolve around the "PC *bang*," dimly lit internet parlors that sit on practically every street corner. A government study estimates that up to 30 percent of South Koreans younger than 18 are at risk of internet addiction. Many already exhibit signs of actual addiction, including an inability to stop themselves from using computers, rising levels of tolerance that drive them to seek ever-longer sessions online, and withdrawal symptoms such as anger and craving when they can't log on. Some users have literally dropped dead from exhaustion after playing online games for days on end.[104] How big a problem is internet addiction here in the United States? Should parents and educators actively police how much time kids spend online, or if they do so are they preventing young people from interacting with their peers in the ways they want?

2-10 Should scientists who study consumer behavior remain impartial, or is it appropriate for them to become involved in the topics they research like those who adhere to the transformative consumer research perspective?

2-11 Today many consumers pursue a "decluttering lifestyle." Should marketers encourage this trend toward simplicity even though it stresses buying less stuff that marketers sell? What marketing opportunities do you foresee if this trend spreads?

2-12 Because of higher competition and market saturation, marketers in industrialized countries try to develop third-world markets. Asian consumers alone spend $90 billion a year on cigarettes, and U.S. tobacco manufacturers push relentlessly into these markets. We find cigarette advertising, which often depicts glamorous Western models and settings, just about everywhere—on billboards, buses, storefronts, and clothing—and tobacco companies sponsor many major sports and cultural events. Some companies even hand out cigarettes and gifts in amusement areas, often to preteens. Should governments allow these practices, even if the products may be harmful to their citizens or divert money that poor

people should spend on essentials? If you were a trade or health official in a third-world country, what guidelines, if any, might you suggest to regulate the import of luxury goods from advanced economies?

2-13 The chapter discusses the practice of serial wardrobing, where people return an outfit after they wear it for a special occasion such as a formal. What do you think of this practice? Is it okay to use an expensive product once and then get your money back?

2-14 A case involving the Wendy's fast-food chain made national headlines when a woman claimed she had found a finger in her bowl of chili. The restaurants became the butt of jokes (some said they served nail clippers with their food instead of forks), and sales dropped dramatically at the company's franchises. This forced layoffs and reduced hours for many employees—until the woman was arrested for fraud.[105] Consumers commonly file lawsuits against companies to claim damages if a product or service didn't work as expected. In some cases, the defendant just settles the suit to make it go away because it costs more to mount a defense than to just pay damages. Are there too many frivolous lawsuits? Does our justice system adequately meet the needs of both consumers and companies in how it awards damages?

2-15 Nonprofit organizations routinely rely on generous corporate donations, and it's common to name facilities after benefactors. The Nationwide Children's Hospital in Ohio is no exception; its name recognizes the insurance company's $50 million donation. Now the hospital added the Abercrombie & Fitch Emergency Department and Trauma Center and there is also the Limited Too & Justice Main Lobby. The Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood opposes this partnership. The group's director commented, "Abercrombie & Fitch is really among the worst of corporate predators. A company with such cynical disregard for children's well-being shouldn't be able to claim the mantle of healing . . . . And, personally, I find it very concerning that they named their hospital after an insurance company."[106] What do you think? Is this over the line, or does it matter where the money comes from as long as the end result is beneficial?

2-16 From time to time advertisers use dark humor to get their messages across, as when a lonely calorie, repairman, or robot considers suicide. Or, an ad may imply that shoppers are "mentally ill" if they pay retail prices. Are these appeals a legitimate way to communicate a message; if so, under what circumstances?

▶ APPLY

2-17 Will consumers trade lower prices for less privacy? Car owners now can let insurance companies monitor their driving, using a new technology, in exchange for lower rates. Customers who sign up for Progressive's TripSense program get a device the size of a Tic Tac box to plug into their cars. The device tracks speed and how many miles are driven at what times of day. Every few months, customers unplug the device from the car, plug it into a computer, download the data, and send the data to the company. Depending on results, discounts will range from 5 to 25 percent. In Great Britain, a major insurer is testing a program called Pay as You Drive. Volunteers will get a device the size of a large smartphone installed in their cars. The gadget will use global positioning satellite technology to track where the car goes, constantly sending information back to the insurance company. Cars that spend more time in safer areas will qualify for bigger discounts.[107] Of course, the potential downside to these efforts is that the insurance companies may be able to collect data on where you have driven, how long you stayed in one location, and so on. Conduct a poll of ten drivers of various ages in which you describe these programs and ask respondents if they would participate to receive a discount on their insurance premiums. What reasons do they give pro and con?

2-18 Many college students "share" music by downloading clips. Interview at least five people who have downloaded at least one song or movie without paying for it. Do they feel they are stealing? What explanations do they offer for this behavior? Try to identify any common themes as a result of these interviews. If you were devising an ad campaign to discourage free downloading, how might you use what you have learned to craft a convincing message?

CASE STUDY

Marketing Responsibly: Patagonia Redefines What It Means to Be Transparent and Authentic

Marketing faces challenges and criticism on many fronts. Apparel and sporting goods company Patagonia has recently been in the spotlight because of its work to change perceptions about the role of marketing.

For over 40 years, Patagonia has supplied well-heeled adventurers with all the gear they need to brave hiking in the Great North Woods, the jungles of Africa, or the wilds of the suburbs![108] Products include everything from fleece jackets and sleeping bags to smoked salmon.[109,110] Patagonia's commitment to corporate social responsibility is embedded in its culture and has spawned initiatives focused on energy conservation, fair trade, recycling, and consumerism.[111,112] In 2011, they even ran an ad on Black Friday saying "Don't Buy This Jacket," encouraging their customers to "buy less and reflect" before they made a purchase.[113]

In an effort to lower the costs of production, the company has joined many other apparel providers in moving their production offshore. A consequence of this strategy is a reduced amount of control over how the laborers who assemble their products are treated and paid. To address this issue, Patagonia helped found the Fair Labor Association, an organization that provides an objective perspective on member companies' labor practices.[114] Since 2007, Patagonia has worked diligently, along with Verite, a nongovernmental organization that works on labor issues to make improvements in the practices of the company's first-tier suppliers. Through these efforts, it was able to reduce the number of first-tier suppliers from 108 to 75, which improved the company's ability to have more control over how these companies treat workers.[115]

However, in 2011 Patagonia's own extensive audits uncovered new supply chain problems with human trafficking, forced labor, and exploitation. They are now trying to go beyond the gains made in their previous work with the first-tier suppliers. Their new focus is on suppliers buried more subtly in the complicated apparel supply chains: mills and suppliers of raw materials. Patagonia has also asked Verite to help with additional audits.[116]

Why has a company so committed to fair labor practices had so many problems conquering this issue? A major problem is the very nature of the apparel supply chain, which is unwieldy and complicated, and spreads around the globe. Patagonia's experience demonstrates the challenges of treating workers fairly at every step of the production process, even when a company has a very public and sincere desire to do so.[117]

Clearly, the company has a lot at stake because its branding identity is so closely tied to its leadership in social responsibility. This may be particularly true with millennials, a key part of Patagonia's customer base and a generation that research indicates is particularly concerned about companies being good corporate citizens.[118]

Patagonia's efforts seem to be paying off in both social good and in revenues. CEO Rose Marcario, who leads the corporate social responsibility (CSR) charge, has seen sales improve fourfold during her decade-long tenure. Following a decision to give away all of its 2016 Black Friday sales to environmental organizations, the company signed up 24,000 new customers. According to Marcario, "Doing good work for the planet creates new markets and makes [us] more money."[119]

In addition to its work on fair labor practices, Patagonia has pursued other CSR (corporate social responsibility) projects. The company launched an initiative focused on the reuse of clothing, in the first move into what is being called **recommerce**. Their Worn Wear program includes options to repair older garments or trade them in for new ones. The used clothing is also resold in the Worn Wear section of Patagonia stores and online. This program helps to meet sustainability goals and also provides a lower cost option for the brand sometimes derisively called "Patagucci."[120] Another initiative, Patagonia Action Works, pairs Patagonia customers with activist groups. Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard says it is "like a dating site" to bring together individuals and grassroots environmental groups.[121]

Patagonia continues to make CSR a priority, including the difficult struggle to monitor and actively work to improve conditions throughout every level of its supply chain.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 2-1 Do you believe that consumers consider a brand's supply chain ethics when they purchase apparel? Do consumers bear any responsibility for the ways in which laborers in the apparel industry are treated?

CS 2-2 Since Patagonia is a higher priced apparel offering, should the company simply move production back to the U.S.? Would you be willing to pay a premium for clothing made in the U.S. where laborers would be protected by U.S. laws? What other factors related to corporate social responsibility should Patagonia consider when it makes the onshore/offshore decision?

CS 2-3 How could the efforts of companies like Patagonia affect CSR efforts in other companies in its industry or in related industries?

MyLab Marketing

If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

2-19 A hot button topic right now involves efforts to curb child obesity by encouraging advertisers to limit the messages they send to kids about foods that are high in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars. Under new federal rules, even the scoreboards in high school gyms will have to advertise only healthy foods. Several large cities including New York City and Philadelphia have tried to prevent the sale of large sizes of sugary drinks to fight obesity. Public health advocates hail these attempts, whereas others argue that they would transform the United States into a "Nanny State" that imposes on our freedom to choose to consume whatever we would like. Should city, state, and federal governments dictate what (legal) products people should consume, even when the population's health is at stake?[122]

2-20 Companies and organizations in the United States spend billions of dollars to acquire and manage data on consumers such as credit information and transaction histories. Well-off consumers obviously hold great attraction to marketers because they have greater buying potential. Today companies have the ability if they choose to offer a more attractive deal to higher-value customers to win their business. The flip side of this process is that potentially they can discriminate against low-income people who won't qualify for lower prices. And in most cases companies don't permit consumers to access their database to learn what they know about them.[123] Is it fair to stratify consumers in this way so that some get access to more attractive options than others?

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Section 1 Data Case

Analyzing the Athletic Shoe Market

Background

You are the marketing analyst for an online athletic shoe store. To date, your company has done little formal marketing research about athletic shoe buyers in the United States. Using the 2017 Spring GfK MRI data, you recently ran a series of reports about the shoe-buying habits of several U.S. consumer segments. At this time, you have decided to focus on the five best-selling shoe brands on your website: Adidas, Asics, Nike, New Balance, and Reebok. After looking through the GfK MRI data report options, you decided that the most fitting question for your purposes was "Did you buy [SHOE BRAND] in the last 12 months?"

The report is designed to compare the shoe-buying habits of consumers across several different consumer characteristics: gender, age, and internet use. In addition, you also created three subsegment schemes that combined two different segmentation variables: Gender and Age (men 18–34 and women 18–34) and Internet Use and Age (heavy internet users 18–34 years old).

Your Goal

First, review the data from the 2017 GfK MRI. You will use this information to make some inferences about the brand preferences of the different segments. You will combine the information in the GfK MRI with some financial assumptions provided by your company to make some recommendations for future marketing tactics.

The Data

You can interpret the data in the following manner:

- Market Segment Size (000s): The total number of U.S. adults that meet the criteria for the segment (regardless of whether they did or did not buy a particular shoe brand).
- Market Segment Size (%): The same as Market Segment Size (000s), but presented as a percentage of all U.S. Adults.
- Estimated Count (000s): The estimated number of U.S. adults within the segment who bought that particular pair of shoes at least once in the last 12 months.
- Percentage of Total: Among all U.S. adults who bought a particular brand of shoes in the last 12 months, the percentage of them who belong to that particular segment.
- Percentage within market segment who bought in last year: The percentage of people within a particular segment who bought the shoe brand within the last 12 months.
- Index: The likelihood of a member of the segment to have bought the particular shoe brand in the last 12 months, indexed to the likelihood of an average U.S. adult (the U.S. average equals an index value of 100). Thus, an index value of 120 can be interpreted as members of that segment being 20 percent more likely than the national average to have bought a particular brand of shoes in the last 12 months.

	Total	Men	Women	Adults 18–34	Men 18–34	Women 18–34	Internet 1 (Heavy Users)	Adults 18–34 and Heavy Internet
Market Segment Size (000s)	245,907	118,605	127,302	74,034	37,020	37,014	49,147	23,632
Market Segment Size (%)	100	48.2	51.8	30.1	15.1	15.1		9.6
ADIDAS								
Estimated Count (000s)	18,845	10,350	8,495	8,493	4,566	3,926	4,910	2,998
% of Total	100	54.92	45.08		24.23	20.83	26.06	15.91
% within Mkt. Seg. who bought last year	7.66	8.73	6.67	11.47	12.33	10.61	9.99	12.68
Index	100	114	87	150	161	138	130	
ASICS								
Estimated Count (000s)	11,135	4,712	6,424	2,909	1,093	1,817	2,070	804
% of Total	100	42.31	57.69	26.13	9.81	16.31	18.59	7.22
% within Mkt. Seg. who bought last year	4.53	3.97		3.93	2.95	4.91	4.21	3.40
Index	100	88	111	87	87	108	93	75

(*Continued*)

	Total	Men	Women	Adults 18–34	Men 18–34	Women 18–34	Internet 1 (Heavy Users)	Adults 18–34 and Heavy Internet
NIKE								
Estimated Count (000s)	56,138	28,119	28,019	23,795		11,858	13,716	8,192
% of Total	100	50.09	49.91	42.39	21,26	21.12	24.43	14.59
% within Mkt. Seg. who bought last year	22.83	23.71	22.01	32.14	32.24	32.04	27.91	34.67
Index	100	104	96	141	141	140	122	152
NEW BALANCE								
Estimated Count (000s)	24,343	12,256	12,087	3,950	2,056	1,895	4,009	1,338
% of Total	100	50.35	49.65	16.23	8.44	7.78	16.47	5.50
% within Mkt. Seg. who bought last year	9.90	10.33	9.49	5.34	5.55	5.12	8.16	5.66
Index	100	104	96	54	56	52	82	57
REEBOK								
Estimated Count (000s)	8,262	4,434	3,829	2,214	1,244	970	1,873	893
% of Total	100	53.66	46.34	26.79	15.05	11.74	22.67	10.80
% within Mkt. Seg. who bought last year	3.36	3.74	3.01	2.99	3.36	2.62	3.81	3.72
Index	100	111	90	89	112	78	113	112

Source: Spring 2014 GfK MRI

Task 1: Correct the Table:

Unfortunately, it appears that someone accidentally left some of the calculated values blank in the table. Luckily, you know you can use the other available information in the table to calculate the missing values.

- Q1: Calculate the market segment size (in percentage) for heavy internet users

$$\text{CALCULATION} = \frac{\text{[Market Segment Size (000s) in the Internet 1 (Heavy Users) Column]}}{\text{[Market Segment Size (000s) in the Total Column]}}$$

- Q2: Calculate the percentage of total market for adults 18–34 who bought Adidas in the last 12 months.

$$\text{CALCULATION} = \frac{\text{[Estimated Count (000s in Adults 18–34]}}{\text{[Estimated Count (000s in Total)]}}$$

- Q3: Calculate the index for adults 18–34 who are heavy internet users who bought Adidas in the last 12 months.

$$\text{CALCULATION} = 100 + \frac{(\text{[percentage within market segment who bought last year in adults 18–34 heavy internet]} - \text{[percentage within market segment who bought last year in total]})}{\text{[percentage within market segment who bought last year in total]}} \times 100$$

- Q4: For the Women column, calculate the percentage within market segment who bought Asics in the last 12 months.

$$\text{CALCULATION} = \frac{\text{[Estimated Count (000s)]}}{\text{[Market Segment Size (000s)]}}$$

- Q5: For men 18–34, calculate the Estimated Count (000s) who bought Nike shoes in the last 12 months.

  CALCULATION = [Market Segment Size (000s) for Men 18–34] × [Percentage within market segment who bought last year for Men 18–34]

Task 2: Making Inferences about Athletic Shoe Buyers

1 Generally speaking, does it appear that heavy internet users are more or less likely than the average U.S. adult to have bought these shoe brands in the last 12 months?
2 If you were going to run a series of advertisements for your company targeting younger adult women, which brand would you recommend to feature on the advertisement? Which shoe brand would you be disinclined to feature? Why?
3 Lately, management for your company has worried that its positioning has completely overlooked serving the wants of "older" consumers (older than 45 years old). If your company decides to market toward older U.S. adults, which of the brands should your company be more conscientious about featuring?

Task 3: Estimating the Value of the Shoe Buying Segments

Using some assumptions provided by the CFO, you are tasked with estimating the annual sales (in dollars) for each shoe buying segment. To do so, you will need to make the following assumptions:

- Average number of pairs bought within 12 months
- Average price of shoe brand

These numbers are estimates that came from the internal efforts of your financial analyst team.

	If someone buys at least one pair of a shoe brand in the last 12 months, how many total pairs of that brand do they buy, on average?	Average price per shoe pair
Adidas	2.0	$70
Asics	2.0	$70
Nike	1.5	$75
New Balance	2.0	$70
Reebok	1.5	$65

1 What are the total estimated sales of these five shoe brands for heavy internet users in the last 12 months?
2 For a random U.S. adult woman, how much would we estimate she spent on Asics shoes in the last 12 months?

▶ DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

1. Based solely on the information that you analyzed, do you think it makes more sense for your company to: treat the whole market as homogeneous (no segmentation), use a single variable segmentation scheme (just gender, just age, just internet usage), or a multivariate segmentation scheme? Regardless of your answer, identify the advantages and limitations associated with your argument.

2. You are about to ask a junior analyst at your company to run another GfK MRI report for you. Which additional variables do you think would be best to add into the report for segmentation purposes? Why?

GfK US LLC, Mediamark Research & Intelligence division.

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JBL
NOISE-CANCELLING HEADPHONES

Section 2

Internal Influences on Consumer Behavior

In this section, we focus on the internal dynamics of consumers. Although "no man is an island," each of us is to some degree "self-contained" in how we receive information about the outside world. We are constantly confronted by advertising messages, products, and other people—not to mention our own thoughts about ourselves—that affect how we make sense of the world and of course what we choose to buy. Each chapter in this section looks at some aspect that may be "invisible" to others but is important to understand how consumers make choices.

Chapter 3 describes the process of perception; the way we absorb and interpret information about products and other people from the outside world. Chapter 4 focuses on how we store this information and how it adds to our existing knowledge about the world. Chapter 5 looks at motivation—why we do what we do—and how our emotional states influence us. Chapter 6 explores how our views about ourselves—particularly our sexuality and our physical appearance—affect what we do, want, and buy. Chapter 7 goes on to consider how our unique personalities, lifestyles, and values also guide us as consumers.

Chapters Ahead



Chapter 3
Perception



Chapter 6
The Self: Mind, Gender, and Body



Chapter 4
Learning and Memory



Chapter 7
Personality, Lifestyles, and Values



Chapter 5
Motivation and Affect

3 Perception

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why

3-1 Products and commercial messages often appeal to our senses, but because of the profusion of these messages we don't notice most of them.

3-2 Perception is a three-stage process that translates raw stimuli into meaning.

3-3 The field of semiotics helps us to understand how marketers use symbols to create meaning.



Source: LensKiss/Shutterstock.

The European vacation has been wonderful, and this stop in Lisbon is no exception. Still, after two weeks of eating his way through some of the continent's finest pastry shops and restaurants, Gary's getting a bit of a craving for his family's favorite snack—a good old American box of Oreos and an ice-cold carton of milk. Unbeknownst to his wife, Janeen, he had stashed away some cookies "just in case"; this was the time to break them out.

Now all he needs is the milk. On an impulse, Gary decides to surprise Janeen with a mid-afternoon treat. He sneaks out of the hotel room while she's napping and finds the nearest *grosa.* When he heads to the store's small refrigerated section, though, he's puzzled—no milk here. Undaunted, Gary asks the clerk, *"Leite, por favor?"* The clerk quickly smiles and points to a rack in the middle of the store piled with little white square boxes. No, that can't be right—Gary resolves to work on his Portuguese. He repeats the question, and again he gets the same answer.

Finally, he investigates, and sure enough, he sees that the labels say they contain something called ultra-heat-treated (UHT) milk. Nasty! Who in the world would drink milk out of a little box that's been sitting on a warm shelf for who knows how long? Gary dejectedly returns to the hotel, his snack-time fantasies crumbling like so many stale cookies.

OBJECTIVE 3-1
Products and commercial messages often appeal to our senses, but because of the profusion of these messages we don't notice most of them.

Sensation

Although news to Gary, many people in the world do drink milk out of a box every day. UHT, pasteurized milk that has been heated until the bacteria that cause it to spoil are destroyed, can last for 5 to 6 months without refrigeration if unopened. The milk tastes slightly sweeter than fresh milk but otherwise it's basically the same.

Shelf-stable milk is particularly popular in Europe, where there is less refrigerator space in homes and stores tend to carry less inventory than in the United States. Seven out of 10 Europeans drink it routinely. Manufacturers keep trying to crack the U.S. market as well, though analysts doubt their prospects. To begin with, milk consumption in the United States is declining steadily as teenagers choose soft drinks instead, even though the Milk Industry Foundation pumped $44 million into an advertising campaign to promote milk drinking ("Got Milk?").

Beyond that, it's hard to convince Americans to drink milk out of a box. In focus groups, U.S. consumers say they have trouble believing the milk is not spoiled or unsafe. In addition, they consider the square, quart-sized boxes more suitable for dry food. Nonetheless, many schools and fast-food chains do buy UHT milk because of its long shelf life.[1] Although Americans may not think twice about drinking a McDonald's McFlurry made with shelf-stable milk, it's still going to be a long, uphill battle to change their minds about the proper partner for a bagful of Oreos.

Whether we experience the taste of Oreos, the sight of a Chloé perfume ad, or the sound of the band Imagine Dragons, we live in a world overflowing with sensations. Wherever we turn, a symphony of colors, sounds, and odors bombards us. Some of the "notes" in this symphony occur naturally, such as the loud barking of a dog, the shades of the evening sky, or the heady smell of a rose bush. Others come from people: The person who plops down next to you in class might wear swirling tattoos, bright pink pants, and enough nasty perfume to make your eyes water.

Marketers certainly contribute to this commotion. Consumers are never far from pop-up ads, product packages, radio and television commercials, and billboards—all clamoring for our attention. Even movie theaters are getting into the act; some are installing moving seats, scent machines, and compressed air blasts to simulate the feeling of bullets flying by.[2]

Sometimes we go out of our way to experience "unusual" sensations: feeling thrills from bungee jumping; playing virtual reality games; or going to theme parks such as Universal Studios, which offers "Fear Factor Live" attractions in which vacationers swallow gross things or perform stomach-churning stunts.[3]



Some of us resort to headphones to help us to "block out the chaos."
Source: Courtesy Cheil Hong Kong. Used with permission.

However, only a select few try to cram down as many peanut butter and banana sandwiches, Moon Pies, or cheesesteaks as (in)humanly possible in events sponsored by Major League Eating/Federation of Competitive Eating (MLE/FCE). Other sensation-seekers happily blast teeth-rattling Meek Mill cuts from their booming car speakers. Each of us copes with this sensory bombardment by paying attention to some stimuli and tuning out others. And, the messages to which we *do* pay attention often wind up affecting us differently from what the sponsors intended; we each put our personal "spin" on things as we assign meanings consistent with our own unique experiences, biases, and desires. This chapter focuses on the process of how we absorb sensations and then use these to interpret the surrounding world.

Sensation refers to the immediate response of our sensory receptors (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, fingers, skin) to basic stimuli such as light, color, sound, odor, and texture. **Perception** is the process by which people select, organize, and interpret these sensations. The study of perception, then, focuses on what we *add* to these raw sensations to give them meaning.

Our brains receive external stimuli, or *sensory inputs*, on a number of channels. We may see a billboard, hear a jingle, feel the softness of a cashmere sweater, taste a new flavor of ice cream, or smell a leather jacket. These inputs are the raw data that begin the perceptual process. Sensory data from the external environment (e.g., hearing a tune on the radio) can generate internal sensory experiences; a song might trigger a young man's memory of his first dance and bring to mind the smell of his date's perfume or the feel of her hair on his cheek.

Marketers' messages are more effective when they appeal to several senses. For example, in a recent study one group read ad copy for potato chips that only mentioned the taste, whereas another group's ad copy emphasized the product's smell and texture, in addition to its taste. The participants in the second group came away thinking the chips would taste better than did those whose ad message only focused on taste.[4]

Each product's unique sensory qualities help it to stand out from the competition, especially if the brand creates a unique association with the sensation. The Owens-Corning Fiberglass Corporation was the first company to trademark a color when it used bright pink for its insulation material; it adopted the Pink Panther as its spokescharacter.[5] Harley-Davidson actually tried (unsuccessfully) to trademark the distinctive sound a "hog" makes when it revs up. The numerous legal battles that companies wage to protect their brand's sensory qualities demonstrate how important these characteristics can be in the battle for consumers' loyalties.

Sensory Marketing

When guests at Omni luxury hotels visit the hotel chain's website to reserve a room, they hear the sound of soft chimes playing. The signature scent of lemongrass and green tea hits them as they enter the lobby. In their rooms, they find eucalyptus bath salts and Sensation Bars, minibars stocked with items such as mojito-flavored jellybeans, and miniature Zen gardens.

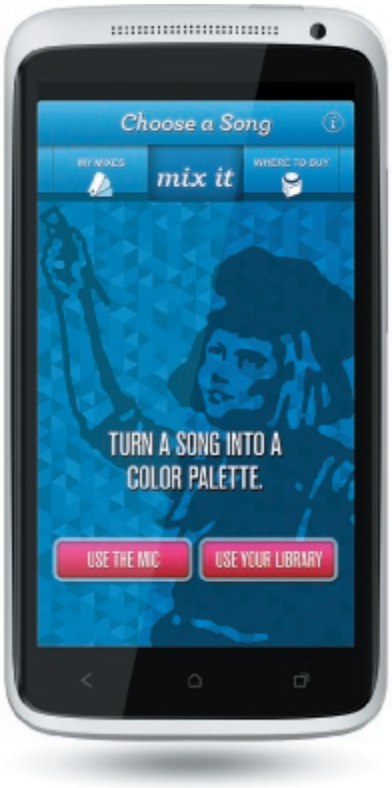
Welcome to the new era of **sensory marketing**, where companies think carefully about the impact of sensations on our product experiences. From hotels to carmakers to brewers, companies recognize that our senses help us decide which products appeal to us—and which ones stand out from a host of similar offerings in the marketplace. In this section, we'll take a closer look at how some smart marketers use our sensory systems to create a competitive advantage.

Vision

Sure, Apple's products usually work pretty well—but that's not why many people buy them. Sleek styling and simple, compact features telegraph an aura of modernity, sophistication, and just plain "cool." Marketers rely heavily on visual elements in advertising, store design, and packaging. They communicate meanings on the *visual channel* through a product's color, size, and styling. For example, recent research shows that people perceive a product to be larger when it is presented in a highly saturated color that captures their attention to a greater extent than a paler hue. As a result, they're even willing to pay more for the saturated version even though both sizes are in fact the same.[6]

Colors may even influence our emotions more directly. Evidence suggests that some colors (particularly red) create feelings of arousal and stimulate appetite, and others (such as blue) create more relaxing feelings. American Express launched its Blue card after its research found that people describe the color as "providing a sense of limitlessness and peace."[7] Advertisements of products presented against a backdrop of blue are better liked than the same ads shown against a red background, and cross-cultural research indicates a consistent preference for blue whether people live in Canada or Hong Kong.[8] People even link moral judgments to colors; in a study, respondents evaluated undesirable consumer behaviors less negatively when described on a red (compared with green) background while they evaluated desirable consumer behaviors more positively when described on a green (compared with red) background.[9]

People who complete tasks when the words or images appear on red backgrounds perform better when they have to remember details; however, they excel at tasks requiring an imaginative response when the words or images are displayed on blue backgrounds. Olympic athletes who wear red uniforms are more likely to defeat competitors in blue uniforms, and men rate women who wear red as more attractive than



Paintlist, a smartphone app from the Dutch Boy paint brand, evaluates music provided by users to suggest colors that it says evoke similar moods.
Source: Courtesy of Marcus Thomas, LLC.

those who wear blue. In one study, interior designers created bars decorated primarily in red, yellow, or blue and invited people to choose one to hang out in. More people chose the yellow and red rooms, and these guests were more social and active—and ate more. In contrast, partygoers in the blue room stayed longer.[10] Perhaps the moral is: Get your prof to give you multiple-choice exams on red paper, essays on blue paper, and then celebrate afterward in a yellow room!

Some reactions to color come from learned associations (which we'll tackle in the next chapter). In Western countries, black is the color of mourning, whereas in some Eastern countries, notably Japan, white plays this role. In addition, we associate the color black with power. Teams in both the National Football League and the National Hockey League who wear black uniforms are among the most aggressive; they consistently rank near the top of their leagues in penalties during the season.[11]

Not surprisingly, there are gender differences in color preferences. People associate darker colors with males and lighter colors with females.[12] Women are drawn toward brighter tones and they are more sensitive to subtle shadings and patterns. Some scientists attribute this to biology; females see color better than males do, and men are 16 times more likely to be color-blind.

Age also influences our responsiveness to color. As we get older, our eyes mature and our vision takes on a yellow cast. Colors look duller to older people, so they prefer white and other bright tones. This helps to explain why mature consumers are much more likely to choose a white car; Lexus, which sells heavily in this market, makes 60 percent of its vehicles in white. The trend toward brighter and more complex colors also reflects the increasingly multicultural makeup of the United States. For example, Hispanics tend to prefer brighter colors as a reflection of the intense lighting conditions in Latin America; strong colors retain their character in strong sunlight.[13] That's why Procter & Gamble uses brighter colors in makeup it sells in Latin countries.

Scientists and philosophers have talked about the meanings of colors since the time of Socrates in the 5th century BCE, but it took Sir Isaac Newton in the early

Teams that wear black uniforms tend to play more aggressively.
Source: Nicholas Piccillo/Fotolia.



17th century to shine light through a prism and reveal the color spectrum. Even then, Newton's observations weren't totally scientific; he identified seven major colors to be consistent with the number of planets known at that time, as well as the seven notes of the diatonic scale.

We now know that perceptions of a color depend on both its physical wavelength and how the mind responds to that stimulus. Yellow is in the middle of wavelengths the human eye can detect, so it is the brightest and attracts attention. The *Yellow Pages* originally were colored yellow to heighten the attention level of bored telephone operators.[14] However, our culture and even our language affect the colors we see. For example, the Welsh language has no words that correspond to green, blue, gray, or brown in English, but it uses other colors that English speakers don't (including one that covers part of green, part of gray, and the whole of our blue). The Hungarian language has two words for what we call red; Navajo has a single word for blue and green, but two words for black.[15] Indeed, colors evoke such strong emotional reactions that some people who are trying to break their smartphone addictions turn their phone screens to grayscale to make them less stimulating.[16]

The choice of a *color palette* is a key issue in package design. Companies used to arrive at these choices casually. For example, Campbell's Soup made its familiar can in red and white because a company executive liked the football uniforms at Cornell University! Today, however, color choices are a serious business. These decisions help to "color" our expectations of what's inside the package. When it launched a white cheese as a "sister product" to an existing blue "Castello" cheese, a Danish company introduced it in a red package under the name of Castello Bianco. They chose this color to provide maximum visibility on store shelves. Although taste tests were positive, sales were disappointing. A subsequent analysis of consumer interpretations showed that the red packaging and the name gave the consumers wrong associations with the product type and its degree of sweetness. Danish consumers had trouble associating the color red with the white cheese. Also, the name *Bianco* connoted a sweetness that was incompatible with the actual taste of the product. The company relaunched it in a white package and named it "White Castello." Almost immediately, sales more than doubled.[17]

Some color combinations come to be so strongly associated with a corporation that they become known as the company's **trade dress**, and courts may even grant exclusive use of specific color combinations: Eastman Kodak's trade dress protects its usage of its distinctive yellow, black, and red boxes. As a rule, however, judges grant

TABLE 3.1 Marketing Applications of Colors

Color	Associations	Marketing Applications
Yellow	Optimistic and youthful	Used to grab window shoppers' attention
Red	Energy	Often seen in clearance sales
Blue	Trust and security	Banks
Green	Wealth	Used to create relaxation in stores
Orange	Aggressive	Call to action: subscribe, buy or sell
Black	Powerful and sleek	Luxury products
Purple	Soothing	Beauty or anti-aging products

Source: Data from Leo Widrich, "Why Is Facebook Blue? The Science Behind Colors in Marketing," Fast Company (May 6, 2013).

trade dress protection only when consumers might be confused about what they buy because of similar coloration of a competitor's packages.[18]

Of course, fashion trends strongly influence our color preferences, so it's no surprise that we tend to encounter a "hot" color on clothing and in home designs in one season that something else replaces the next season (as when the *fashionistas* proclaim, "Brown is the new black!" or fans of the TV series counter with, "No, *Orange is the New Black*"). These styles do not happen by accident; most people don't know (but now *you* do) that a handful of firms produce **color forecasts** that manufacturers and retailers buy so they can be sure they stock up on the next hot hue. For example, Pantone, Inc. (one of these color arbiters) identified Ultra Violet as the Color of the Year for 2018. The company lyrically describes the color as, "Complex and contemplative, Ultra Violet suggests the mysteries of the cosmos, the intrigue of what lies ahead, and the discoveries beyond where we are now. The vast and limitless night sky is symbolic of what is possible and continues to inspire the desire to pursue a world beyond our own."[19] Table 3.1 summarizes how experts link specific colors to marketing contexts.

Dollars and Scents

Odors stir emotions or create a calming feeling. They invoke memories or relieve stress. Die-hard New York Yankees fans can buy fragrances to bring back that stadium feeling: "New York Yankees" (for him) and "New York Yankees For Her."[20] As scientists continue to discover the powerful effects of smell on behavior, marketers come up with ingenious ways to exploit these connections. This form of sensory marketing takes interesting turns as manufacturers find new ways to put scents into products, including men's suits, lingerie, detergents, and aircraft cabins. And this just in: Burger King in Japan sells a "Flame Grilled" fragrance to customers who want to smell like a Whopper.[21]

One study found that consumers who viewed ads for either flowers or chocolate and who also were exposed to flowery or chocolaty odors spent more time processing the product information and were more likely to try different alternatives within each product category.[22] Another reported that subjects showed higher recall of a test brand's attributes if it was embedded with a scent—and this effect persisted as long as two weeks after the experiment.[23] Retailers like Hugo Boss often pump a "signature" scent into their stores; one study reported that "warm scents" such as vanilla or cinnamon as opposed to "cool scents" such as peppermint enhance shoppers' purchases of premium brands.[24]

Some of our responses to scents result from early associations that call up good or bad feelings, and that explains why businesses explore connections among smell, memory, and mood.[25] Researchers for Folgers found that for many people the smell of coffee summons up childhood memories of their mothers cooking breakfast, so the aroma reminds them of home. The company turned this insight into a commercial in which a young man in an army uniform arrives home early one morning. He goes to the kitchen, opens a Folgers' package, and the aroma wafts upstairs. His mother opens her eyes, smiles, and exclaims, "He's home!"[26]

We process fragrance cues in the *limbic system*, the most primitive part of the brain and the place where we experience immediate emotions. One study even found that the scent of fresh cinnamon buns induced sexual arousal in a sample of male students![27] In another study, women sniffed T-shirts that men had worn for two days (wonder how much they paid them to do that?) and reported which they preferred. The women were most attracted to the odor of men who were genetically similar to them, though not *too* similar. The researchers claimed the findings were evidence that we are "wired" to select compatible mates, but not those so similar as to cause inbreeding problems.[28]

Sound

BMW recently began to use an **audio watermark** at the end of TV and radio ads around the world. "The company wants to establish what the brand sounds like," so all of its messages end with a melody "underscored by two distinctive bass tones that form the sound logo's melodic and rhythmic basis." BMW claims this sound signature represents "sheer driving pleasure."[29]

Music and other sounds affect people's feelings and behaviors. Researchers are finding, for example, that (as we all probably knew already) when people drink beer and listen to music that's consistent with that brand's identity, they enjoy the beverage more.[30] Apple Music and the speaker manufacturer Sonos conducted a study of 30,000 music listeners (note: consider the source here!) and found that music made household chores and other activities more enjoyable. When people listened to music, they literally moved closer to one another. Couples spent 37 percent more "awake time" in bed. And, respondents were 18 percent more likely to say the words, "I love you."[31]

Some marketers who come up with brand names pay attention to **sound symbolism**; the process by which the way a word sounds influences our assumptions about what it describes and attributes, such as size. For example, consumers are more likely to recognize brand names that begin with a hard consonant like a K (Kellogg's) or P (Pepsi). We also tend to associate certain vowel and consonant sounds (or *phonemes*) with perceptions of large and small size. Mental rehearsal of prices containing numbers with small phonemes results in overestimation of price discounts, whereas mental rehearsal of prices containing numbers with large phonemes results in underestimation.[32] One study even found that the sound symbolism in a stock's ticker symbol helped to predict the company's performance during its first year of trading.[33]

Touch

Pretend for a moment that you are shopping online for a sweater. You navigate to www.landsend.com, scroll through the cardigans, and pause at one that appeals to you. You click on the sweater for more information. A larger photo appears, and the caption reads: "Imagine holding this sweater, feeling the soft, 100% cotton in your hands." What if you did as instructed? Would your perception of the sweater be any different than if you had not imagined feeling it?

We have a tendency to want to touch objects, although typing or using a mouse are skills we have to learn. The proliferation of touchscreens on computers, ATM machines, digital cameras, GPS devices, and e-readers is an outgrowth of the **natural user interface** philosophy of computer design. This approach incorporates habitual human movements that we don't have to learn. Sony decided to offer touchscreens on its e-readers after its engineers repeatedly observed people in focus groups automatically swipe the screen of its older, nontouch models. Touchscreens also appear on exercise machines, in hospitals, at airport check-in terminals, and on Virgin America airplanes.[34]

It seems that encouraging shoppers to touch a product encourages them to imagine they own it, and researchers know that people value things more highly if they own them: This is known as the **endowment effect**. One set of researchers reported that participants who simply touched an item (an inexpensive coffee mug) for 30 seconds or less created a greater level of attachment to the product; this connection in turn boosted what they were willing to pay for it.[35] Indeed, the power of touch even translates to online shopping where touchscreens create a stronger feeling of psychological ownership compared to products consumers explore using a touchpad or a mouse.[36]

Sensations that reach the skin, whether from a luxurious massage or the bite of a winter wind, stimulate or relax us. Researchers even have shown that touch can influence sales interactions. In one study, diners whom waitstaff touched gave bigger tips, and the same researchers reported that food demonstrators in a supermarket who lightly touched customers had better luck in getting shoppers to try a new snack product and to redeem coupons for the brand.[37] On the other hand, an accidental touch from a stranger (especially a male) leads to more negative evaluations of products a shopper encounters in a store.[38]

Some anthropologists view our experience of touch much like a primal language, one we learn well before writing and speech. Indeed, researchers are starting to identify the important role the **haptic** (touch) sense plays in consumer behavior. Haptic senses appear to moderate the relationship between product experience and judgment confidence. This confirms the commonsense notion that we're more sure about what we perceive when we can touch it (a major problem for those who sell products online). Individuals who score high on a "Need for Touch" (NFT) scale are especially sensitive to the haptic dimension. These people respond positively to such statements as:

- When walking through stores, I can't help touching all kinds of products.
- Touching products can be fun.
- I feel more comfortable purchasing a product after physically examining it.[39]

Some Japanese companies take this idea a step farther with their practice of **Kansei engineering**, a philosophy that translates customers' feelings into design elements. The designers of the Mazda Miata focused on young The classic, contoured Coca-Cola bottle also attests to the power of touch. The bottle was designed approximately 90 years ago to satisfy the request of a U.S. bottler for a soft-drink container that people could identify even in the dark. drivers who saw the car as an extension of their body, a sensation they call "horse and rider as one." After extensive research they discovered that making the stick shift exactly 9.5 centimeters long conveys the optimal feeling of sportiness and control.[40]

Taste

Our taste receptors obviously contribute to our experience of many products. So-called "flavor houses" develop new concoctions to please the changing palates of consumers. Scientists are right behind them as they build new devices to test these flavors. Alpha M.O.S. sells a sophisticated electronic tongue for tasting, and the company is working on what its executives call an *electronic mouth*, complete with artificial saliva, to chew food and to dissect its flavor. Coca-Cola and PepsiCo use the tongue to test the quality of corn syrups, and Bristol-Myers Squibb and Roche use the device to formulate medicines that don't taste bitter.[41]

Obviously taste is a huge driver behind the $46 billion Americans spend on food and beverages in a year.[42] Every day legions of "foodies" embark on a quest for new flavors and dining experiences. A growing recognition that eating is a more complicated multisensory experience than just stuffing some Oreos down your throat is launching a new field of study called **gastrophysics**. This focus on the science of eating considers how physics, chemistry, and yes, perception, influence how we experience what we put in our mouths. For example, scientists report that while tomato juice is not a terribly popular beverage (at least without a vodka accompaniment), it accounts for over 25 percent of the drinks passengers order on airplanes. The reason? All foods are a combination of five basic tastes:



Taste gives us important feedback about food products.
Source: OBEYphoto/Shutterstock.

sweetness, sourness, bitterness, saltiness, and *umami* (a savory taste). Umami is a meaty or brothy sensation we get in diverse foods such as mushrooms, tomatoes, and even breast milk. It turns out that exposure to high levels of noise dulls our ability to taste sweet things, so people instead prefer to ingest a dose of umami when they fly.[43] All of our senses interact with one another to influence taste: People think that potato chips with a louder crunch taste better, and they don't like food that's served on red plates.

Augmented and Virtual Reality

The sensations we receive from the physical world can be overwhelming, but are you ready to deal with digital sensations as well? **Augmented reality (AR)** refers to media that superimpose one or more digital layers of data, images, or video over a physical object. If you've ever watched a three-dimensional (3D) movie with those clunky glasses, you've experienced one form of AR. Or, if you've seen that yellow line in an NFL game that shows the first down marker, you've also encountered AR in a simple form.

More likely, though, in the next few years you'll live in AR through your smartphone or tablet. New apps like Google Goggles (for Android phones) and Layar (for Android and Apple devices) impose a layer of words and pictures on whatever you



A virtual reality headset.
Source: Rommel Canlas/123RF.

see in your phone's viewer. Microsoft's HoloLens technology blends holograms with what you see in your physical space so that you can actually manipulate digital images—for example, a user who wants to assemble a piece of furniture or fix a broken sink can actually "see" where each part connects to the next through the goggles.[44] Air New Zealand is experimenting with a HoloLens headset for its flight attendants. When an attendant looks at a customer, the HoloLens displays personal details including their preferred meal, why they're traveling—and even how many drinks they've had.[45]

AR apps open new worlds of information (and marketing communications). Do you want to test drive a Range Rover SUV using your smartphone?[46] Would you like to read the bio of the singer you see on a CD cover? Who painted that cool mural in your local bar? How much did that house you were looking at eventually sell for? Just point your smartphone at each and the information will be superimposed on your screen. AR is about to be big business: Analysts project that revenue from AR apps will hit $120 billion by 2020.[47]

The imminent explosion of virtual reality (VR) technology in the consumer market also is driving the integration between physical sensations and digital information. Unlike AR that delivers a combination of both sensory experiences, VR provides a totally immersive experience that transports the user into an entirely separate 3D environment. Facebook purchased the Oculus VR company in 2014, and this was just the first step in what promises to be an avalanche of commercially available VR technology from major companies including Samsung, Sony, and Google. Worldwide revenues from VR applications are projected to exceed $40 billion by 2020.[48]

OBJECTIVE 3-2
Perception is a three-stage process that translates raw stimuli into meaning.

The Stages of Perception

Like computers, we undergo stages of *information processing* in which we input and store stimuli. Unlike computers, though, we do *not* passively process whatever information happens to be present. In the first place, we notice only a

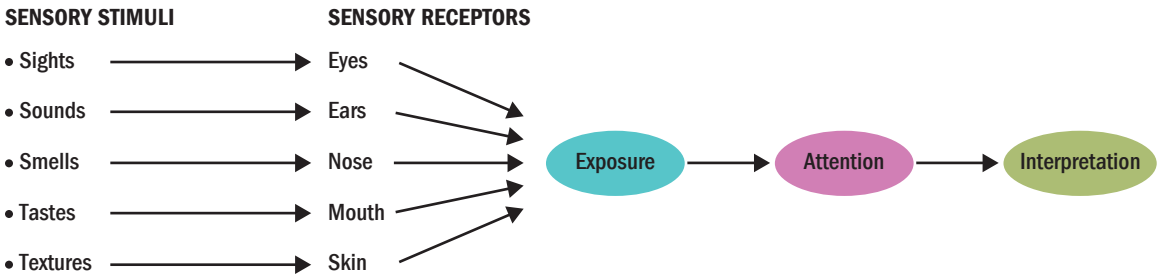


Figure 3.1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE PERCEPTUAL PROCESS

small number of the stimuli in our environment, simply because there are so many different ones out there vying for our attention. Of those we do notice, we attend to an even smaller number—and we might not process the stimuli that do enter consciousness objectively. Each individual interprets the meaning of a stimulus in a manner consistent with his or her own unique biases, needs, and experiences. As Figure 3.1 shows, these three stages of *exposure, attention*, and *interpretation* make up the process of perception.

Stage 1: Exposure

Exposure occurs when a stimulus comes within the range of someone's sensory receptors. Consumers concentrate on some stimuli, are unaware of others, and even go out of their way to ignore some messages. We notice stimuli that come within range for even a short time—*if* we so choose. However, getting a message noticed in such a short time (or even in a longer one) is no mean feat.

Sensory Thresholds

Before we consider what else people may choose not to perceive, let's consider what they are *capable* of perceiving. By this we mean that stimuli may be above or below a person's **sensory threshold**, which is the point at which it is strong enough to make a conscious impact in his or her awareness.

If you have ever blown a dog whistle and watched your pooch respond to a sound you cannot hear, you won't be surprised to learn that there are some stimuli that people simply can't perceive. Some of us pick up sensory information that others, whose sensory channels have diminished because of disability or age, cannot. The science of **psychophysics** focuses on how people integrate the physical environment into their personal, subjective worlds.

It sounds like a great name for a rock band, but the **absolute threshold** refers to the minimum amount of stimulation a person can detect on a given sensory channel. The sound a dog whistle emits is at too high a frequency for human ears to pick up, so this stimulus is beyond our auditory absolute threshold. The absolute threshold is an important consideration when we design marketing stimuli. A highway billboard might have the most entertaining copy ever written, but this genius is wasted if the print is too small for passing motorists to see it. In contrast, the **differential threshold** refers to the ability of a sensory system to detect changes in or differences between two stimuli. The minimum difference we can detect between two stimuli is the **just noticeable difference (j.n.d.)**.

The dual issues of *if* and *when* consumers will notice a difference between two stimuli is relevant to many marketing situations. Sometimes a marketer may want to ensure that consumers notice a change, such as when a retailer offers merchandise



Figure 3.2 THE PEPSI LOGO OVER TIME

Source: PEPSI-COLA, PEPSI and the Pepsi Globe are registered trademarks of PepsiCo, Inc. Used with permission.

at a discount. In other situations, the marketer may want to downplay the fact that it has made a change, such as when a store raises a price or a manufacturer reduces the size of a package. When a brand tries to modernize its logo, it has to walk a fine line because consumers tend to get tired of old-fashioned designs but they still want to be able to identify the familiar product. Figure 3.2 shows the evolution of the Pepsi label over time.

A consumer's ability to detect a difference between two stimuli is relative. A whispered conversation that might be unintelligible on a noisy street can suddenly become public and embarrassingly loud in a quiet library. It is the *relative difference* between the decibel level of the conversation and its surroundings, rather than the absolute loudness of the conversation itself, that determines whether the stimulus will register.

In the 19th century, a psychophysicist named Ernst Weber found that the amount of change required for the perceiver to notice a change systematically relates to the intensity of the original stimulus. The stronger the initial stimulus, the greater a change must be for us to notice it. This relationship is **Weber's Law**.

Consider how Weber's Law works for a product when it goes on sale. If a retailer believes that a markdown should be at least 20 percent for the reduction to make an impact on shoppers, it should cut the price on a pair of socks that retails for $10 to $8 (a $2 discount) for shoppers to realize a difference. However, a sports coat that sells for $100 would not benefit from a $2 discount; the retailer would have to mark it down $20 to achieve the same impact.

As the cost of raw materials skyrockets because of shortages caused by natural disasters such as the Japanese earthquake and tsunami and manufactured ones like the conflict in the Middle East, some companies try to camouflage price increases as they shrink the size of packages instead of charging more. Sometimes marketers use code words to announce a change: they may label the smaller packages as "green" because there is less plastic or cardboard in a smaller box, more "portable" when they squeeze products into little carry bags, or "healthier" because smaller amounts translate into fewer calories. For example, Kraft brought out "Fresh Stacks" packages for its Nabisco Premium saltines and Honey Maid graham crackers. Each holds about 15 percent fewer crackers than the standard boxes for the same price. But,

Kraft notes that because the new packages include more sleeves of crackers, they are more portable—and the company notes that as an added benefit the smaller boxes supply crackers that will be fresher when you get around to eating them. A packaging expert noted that typically, when the economy recovers, companies respond with a new "jumbo-size" product that is usually even more expensive per ounce. Then the process begins again: "It's a continuous cycle, where at some point the smallest package offered becomes so small that perhaps they're phased out and replaced by the medium-size package, which has been shrunk down."[49]

Weber's Law, ironically, is a challenge to green marketers who try to reduce the sizes of packages when they produce concentrated (and more earth-friendly) versions of their products. Makers of laundry detergent brands have to convince their customers to pay the same price for about half the detergent. Also, because of pressure from powerful retailers such as Walmart that want to fit more bottles on their shelves, the size of detergent bottles is shrinking significantly. Procter & Gamble, Unilever, and Henkel all maintain that their new concentrated versions will allow people to wash the same number of loads with half the detergent. One perceptual trick they're using to try to convince consumers of this is the redesign of the bottle cap: Both P&G and Church & Dwight use a cap with a broader base and shorter sides to persuade consumers that they need a smaller amount.[50]

Subliminal Perception

A German ad agency and the broadcaster Sky Deutschland are teaming up on a new advertising platform that targets weary commuters who rest their heads against the windows of train cars. They call it the "talking window"; it uses "bone conduction technology" that emits vibrations the brain reads as sounds. As the commuter starts to nod off, he or she will suddenly hear a voice inside his or her head that pitches a product.[51] That will get your attention!

Most marketers want to create messages *above* consumers' thresholds so people will notice them. Ironically, a good number of consumers instead believe that marketers design many advertising messages so they will be perceived unconsciously, or *below* the threshold of recognition. Another word for threshold is *limen*, and we term stimuli that fall below the limen *subliminal.* **Subliminal perception** refers to a stimulus below the level of the consumer's awareness.

This topic has captivated the public for more than 50 years, despite the fact that there is virtually no proof that this process has *any* effect on consumer behavior. A survey of U.S. consumers found that almost two-thirds believe in the existence of subliminal advertising, and more than one-half are convinced that this technique can get them to buy things they do not really want.[52] ABC rejected a Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) commercial that invited viewers to slowly replay the ad to find a secret message, citing the network's long-standing policy against subliminal advertising. KFC argued that the ad wasn't subliminal at all because the company told viewers about the message and how to find it. The network wasn't convinced.[53]

Like the KFC ad, most examples of subliminal advertising that people "discover" are not subliminal at all—on the contrary, the images are quite apparent. Remember, if you can see it or hear it, it's not subliminal; the stimulus is above the level of conscious awareness. Nonetheless, the continuing controversy about subliminal persuasion has been important in shaping the public's beliefs about advertisers' and marketers' abilities to manipulate consumers against their will. A kerfuffle generated by a McDonald's Happy Meal toy illustrates that we tend to see or hear what we are looking for: When the company released a toy Minion (from the popular *Despicable Me* movie series), some outraged parents stated it

This Canadian beer ad pokes fun at subliminal advertising.
Source: © 2005. Molson USA, LLC.



was sending a "subliminal message" to their children. They claimed that it spoke gibberish that sounded a lot like "what the" and a word that rhymes with duck. McDonald's response: "Minions speak 'Minionese' which is a random combination of many languages and nonsense words and sounds . . . . Any perceived similarities to words used within the English language is purely coincidental."[54]

Marketers supposedly send subliminal messages on both visual and aural channels. **Embeds** are tiny figures they insert into magazine advertising via high-speed photography or airbrushing. These hidden images, usually of a sexual nature, supposedly exert strong but unconscious influences on innocent readers. Some limited evidence hints at the possibility that embeds can alter the moods of men when they're exposed to sexually suggestive subliminal images, but the effect (if any) is subtle—and may even work in the opposite direction if this creates negative feelings among viewers.[55] To date, the only real impact of this interest in hidden messages is to sell more copies of "exposés" written by a few authors



and to make some consumers (and students taking a consumer behavior class) look a bit more closely at print ads, perhaps seeing whatever their imaginations lead them to see.

Some research by clinical psychologists suggests that subliminal messages can influence people under specific conditions, though it is doubtful that these techniques would be of much use in most marketing contexts. For this kind of message to have a prayer of working, an advertiser has to tailor it specifically to an individual rather than the mass messages suitable for the general public.[56] The stimulus should also be as close to the liminal threshold as possible. Here are other discouraging factors:

- There are wide individual differences in threshold levels. For a message to avoid conscious detection by consumers who have low thresholds, it would have to be so weak that it would not reach those who have high thresholds.

- Advertisers lack control over consumers' distance and position from a screen. In a movie theater, for example, only a small portion of the audience would be in exactly the right seats to be exposed to a subliminal message.
- The viewer must pay absolute attention to the stimulus. People who watch a television program or a movie typically shift their attention periodically, and they might not even notice when the stimulus appears.
- Even if the advertiser induces the desired effect, it works only at a general level. For example, a message might increase a person's thirst—but not necessarily for a specific drink. Because the stimulus just affects a basic drive, a marketer could find that after all the bother and expense of creating a subliminal message, demand for competitors' products increases as well!

Clearly, there are better ways to get our attention—let's see how.

Stage 2: Attention

As you sit in a lecture, you might find your mind wandering (yes, even you!). One minute you are concentrating on the professor's words, and the next you catch yourself daydreaming about the upcoming weekend. Suddenly, you tune back in as you hear your name being spoken. Fortunately, it's a false alarm—the professor has called on another "victim" who has the same first name. But she's got your attention now.

Attention refers to the extent to which processing activity is devoted to a particular stimulus. As you know from sitting through both interesting and "less interesting" lectures, this allocation can vary depending on both the characteristics of the stimulus (i.e., the lecture itself) and the recipient (i.e., your mental state at the time).

Although we live in an "information society," we can have too much of a good thing. Consumers often experience **sensory overload**; we are exposed to far more information than we can process. In our society, much of this bombardment comes from commercial sources, and the competition for our attention steadily increases. The average adult is exposed to about 3,500 pieces of advertising information every single day—up from about 560 per day 30 years ago.

Are you a **media snacker**? A recent study found that consumers in their 20s ("digital natives") switch media venues about 27 times per nonworking hour—the equivalent of more than 13 times during a standard half-hour TV show.[57] That means the fight for your attention—or what some marketers refer to as an **eyeball economy**—gets tougher every day.

How can we follow it all and still get on with our lives? One popular solution to the avalanche of data is **mindfulness**. This movement, which is related to the practice of meditation, encourages followers to slow down, tune out distractions, and focus on what they are feeling at the moment.[58] Ironically, mindfulness has itself become an industry. You can buy Mindful Lotus tea, Mindful meats, or Mindful Mints; subscribe to one of the many mindfulness apps like Headspace to follow guided exercises; or attend some of the many seminars and workshops available. Even athletes have gotten into the game; the Golden State Warriors, the Seattle Seahawks, and the Boston Red Sox practice mindfulness in their locker rooms. A research company estimates that meditation-related businesses in the United States alone generated almost $1 billion in revenue. That's a lot to meditate about!

Multitasking

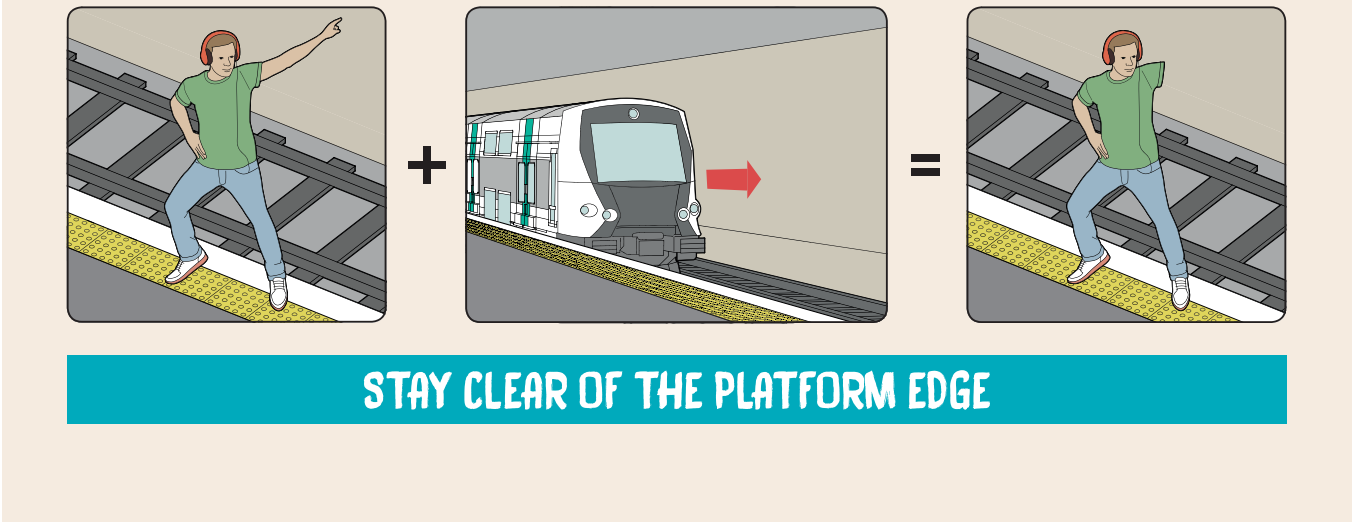
Pedtextrian. Text-walker. Wexting. **Cellphone zombie**. Whatever you call it, walking while texting is becoming a public health problem. Due to a spike in pedestrian deaths,

Honolulu became the first city to outlaw this practice.[59] Paying attention to where you're going seems so . . . 2008.

Getting the attention of young people in particular is a challenge—as your professor probably knows! A large proportion of teens report that they engage in **multitasking**, where they process information from more than one medium at a time as they alternate among their cell phones, TVs, and laptops.[60] One study observed 400 people for a day and found that 96 percent of them were multitasking about a third of the time they used media.[61]

What impact does all this multitasking have on consumers' ability to absorb, retain, and understand information? One possible consequence: These bursts of stimulation provoke the body to secrete the hormone dopamine, which is addictive. When we go without these squirts, we feel bored. Some scientists warn that our cravings for more stimulation distract us from more prolonged thought processes and reduce our ability to concentrate (don't text and drive!). Researchers find that heavy multitaskers have more trouble focusing, and they experience more stress. One study found that people who are interrupted by email report significantly more stress than those who were allowed to focus on a task.[62]

Before you panic, there is some good news: Evidence suggests that the brains of internet users become more efficient at finding information, and some videogame players develop better eyesight. One team of researchers found that players of fast-paced video games could track the movement of a third more objects on a screen



This French ad reminds us of the dangers of multiasking and failing to pay attention to our surroundings.
Source: Image courtesy Havas Paris; Chief Creative Officer :Christophe Coffre; Art Director: Nathalie Winkelmann; Copywriter : Jéremie Pouchin; Illustrator : TOBY

than non-players. They say the games can improve reaction and the ability to pick out details amid clutter. For better or worse, technology seems to be rewiring our brains to try to pay attention to more stimuli. Today we consume three times as much information each day as people did in 1960. We constantly shift attention: Computer users at work change windows or check email or other programs nearly 37 times an hour. Computer users visit an average of 40 websites a day.[63]

Marketers constantly search for ways to break through the clutter and grab people's attention. Some tactics are straightforward, such as when manufacturers try to get their brands shelved at eye level in a store and toward the center of a display because they know that is where shoppers are most likely to look.[64] In the online world, advertisers keep innovating to get visitors to watch their messages. One of the most popular today is **rich media**—the use of animated gif files or video clips to grab viewers' attention. LowerMyBills.com is notorious for its endless loops of silhouetted dancers and surprised office workers, whereas other ads spring into action when you move the cursor over them. AG Jeans for example, allows you to build an outfit on your phone "tap"? for phone? Other rich media are online versions of familiar TV commercials that sit frozen on the website until you click them. *Teaser ads*, much like those you see on TV that give you a taste of the story but make you return later for the rest, also turn up on websites.[65]

Because the brain's capacity to process information is limited, consumers are selective about what they pay attention to. The process of **perceptual selection** means that people attend to only a small portion of the stimuli to which they are exposed. Consumers practice a form of "psychic economy" as they pick and choose among stimuli to avoid being overwhelmed. How do we choose? Both personal and stimulus factors help to decide.

Personal Selection Factors

How do marketers seem to "know" when you're hungry and choose those times to bombard you with food ads? The answer is they don't—at least not yet. **Perceptual vigilance** means we are more likely to be aware of stimuli that relate to our current needs.

The flip side of perceptual vigilance is **perceptual defense**. This means that we tend to see what we want to see—and we don't see what we don't want to see. If a stimulus threatens us in some way, we may not process it, or we may distort its meaning so that it's more acceptable. For example, a heavy smoker may block out images of cancer-scarred lungs because these vivid reminders hit a bit too close to home.

Still another factor is **adaptation**, which is the degree to which consumers continue to notice a stimulus over time. The process of adaptation occurs when we no longer pay attention to a stimulus because it is so familiar. A consumer can "habituate" and require increasingly stronger "doses" of a stimulus to notice it. A commuter who is en route to work might read a billboard message when the board is first installed, but after a few days it simply becomes part of the passing scenery. Several factors can lead to adaptation:

- **Intensity**—Less-intense stimuli (e.g., soft sounds or dim colors) habituate because they have less sensory impact.
- **Discrimination**—Simple stimuli habituate because they do not require attention to detail.
- **Exposure**—Frequently encountered stimuli habituate as the rate of exposure increases.
- **Relevance**—Stimuli that are irrelevant or unimportant habituate because they fail to attract attention.



Is this dress white and gold, or blue and black? Many people engaged in a fierce online debate about the answer. Which colors do you see?
Hint: The company that made the dress describes it on its website as "Royal Blue."
Source: Amina Khan/National Science Foundation.

Stimulus Selection Factors

In addition to the receiver's mind-set, characteristics of the stimulus itself play an important role to determine what we notice and what we ignore. Marketers need to understand these factors so they can create messages and packages that will have a better chance to cut through the clutter. For example, when researchers used infrared eye-tracking equipment to measure what ads consumers look at, they found that visually complex ads are more likely to capture attention.[66]

In general, we are more likely to notice stimuli that differ from others around them (remember Weber's Law). A message creates **contrast** in several ways:

- **Size**—The size of the stimulus itself in contrast to the competition helps to determine if it will command attention. Readership of a magazine ad increases in proportion to the size of the ad.[67]
- **Color**—As we've seen, color is a powerful way to draw attention to a product or to give it a distinct identity. Black & Decker developed a line of tools it called DeWalt to target the residential construction industry. The company colored the new line yellow instead of black; this made the equipment stand out against other "dull" tools.[68]
- **Position**—Not surprisingly, we stand a better chance of noticing stimuli that are in places where we're more likely to look. That's why the competition is so heated among suppliers to have their products displayed in stores at eye level. In magazines, ads that are placed toward the front of the issue, preferably on the right-hand side, also win out in the race for readers' attention. (Hint: The next time you read a magazine, notice which pages you're more likely to spend time looking at.)[69] A study that tracked consumers' eye movements as they scanned telephone directories also illustrated the importance of message position. Consumers scanned listings in alphabetical order, and they noticed 93 percent of quarter-page display ads but only 26 percent of plain listings. Their eyes were drawn to color ads first, and these were viewed longer than black-and-white ones. In addition, subjects spent 54 percent more time viewing ads for businesses they ended up choosing, which illustrates the influence of attention on subsequent product choice.[70] Another study reported that advertisers can increase brand recall and choice if they change the location of brand logos and product depictions across ad exposures.[71]

And products that are located in the center of a person's field of vision are more likely to receive attention.[72]

Position also is important in online advertising. Sophisticated eye-tracking studies clearly show that most search engine users view only a limited number of search results. When the typical shopper looks at a search page, his or her eye travels across the top of the search result, returns to the left of the screen, and then travels down to the last item shown on the screen without scrolling. Search engine marketers call this space on the screen where we are virtually guaranteed to view listings the **golden triangle** (see Figure 3.3).[73]

- **Novelty**—Stimuli that appear in unexpected ways or places tend to grab our attention. Packages that "stand out" visually on store shelves have an advantage, especially when the consumer doesn't have a strong preference for brands in the

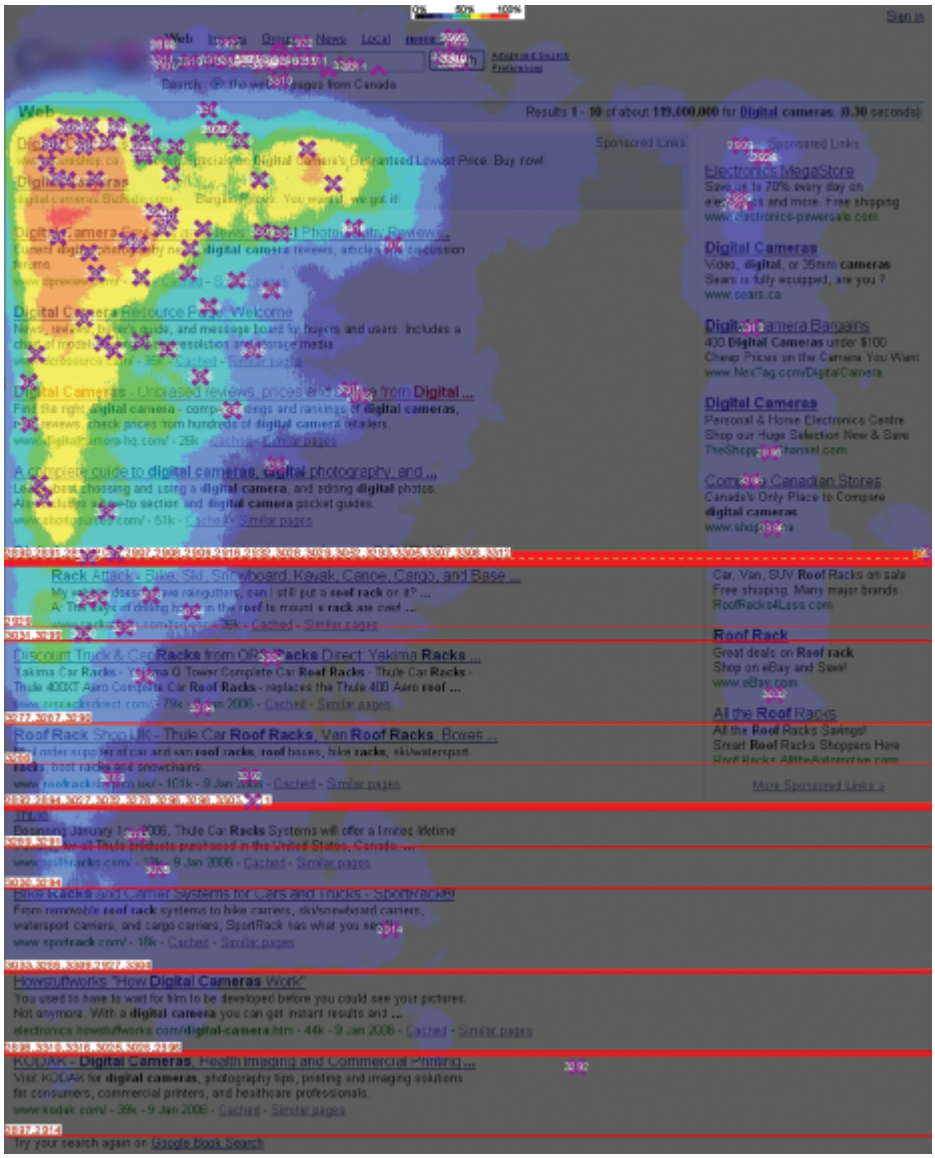


Figure 3.3 THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Eye-tracking studies reveal that people typically spend most of their time on a website looking at the "golden triangle" outlined by yellow, orange and red.

Source: Enquiro Search Solutions, Inc. (Now Mediative Performance LP).

category and he or she needs to make rapid decisions.[74] One solution is to put ads in unconventional places, where there will be less competition for attention. These places include the backs of shopping carts, walls of tunnels, floors of sports stadiums, and yes, even public restrooms.[75] An outdoor advertising agency in London constructs huge ads in deserts and farm fields adjacent to airports so that passengers who look out the window can't help but pay attention. It prints the digital ads on pieces of PVC mesh that sit on frames a few inches above the ground.[76]

Indeed, one study indicates that novelty in the form of interruptions actually *intensifies* our experiences; distraction increases our enjoyment of pleasant stimuli because it amplifies our dislike of unpleasant stimuli. According to this research, people actually enjoy TV shows *more* when commercials interrupt them. A group of undergraduates watched an episode of an old sitcom (*Taxi*) with which they were unfamiliar. Half viewed the original broadcast, which included ads for a jeweler, a lawyer, and other businesses; the other half saw the show with all commercials deleted. Students who saw the original actually gave it higher evaluations. The researchers found a similar pattern when they interrupted people who were getting a massage. In contrast, subjects reported that the irritating sound of a vacuum cleaner was even worse when they got a break from listening to it and then had to hear it resume! The researchers interpret these results as the outcome of adaptation: We experience events more intensely at first but then get used to them. When we experience an interruption and then start over, we revert to the original intensity level.[77]

Stage 3: Interpretation

Interpretation refers to the meanings we assign to sensory stimuli. Just as people differ in terms of the stimuli that they perceive, the meanings we assign to these stimuli vary as well. Many of these meanings depend on our socialization within a society: Even sensory perception is culturally specific. A team of anthropologists created a "kit" of stimuli to compare what people around the world perceive; this included color chips, scratch-and-sniff cards, sounds recorded at different frequencies, and so on. When they exposed the same stimuli to people in more than 20 different cultures, the results were dramatic: For example, prior research on mostly English-speaking people indicated that the typical person is not good at identifying the smell of everyday things like coffee, peanut butter, and chocolate; they usually identify about half of them correctly. However, people who live on the Malay Peninsula were more accurate.

Language differences drive some of these contrasts. The researchers found that English and Dutch speakers used different metaphors than Farsi and Turkish people to describe pitch; the latter think of sounds as thin or thick rather than high or low. When Dutch speakers heard a tone while they were shown a mismatched height bar (e.g., a high tone and a low bar) and were asked to sing the tone, they sang a lower tone—but this wasn't the case when they saw a thin or thick bar. In contrast, when Farsi speakers heard a tone and were shown a bar of mismatched thickness, they misremembered the tone but not when they were shown a bar mismatched for height.[78] As we'll see in Chapter 14, culture matters—a lot.

Two people can see or hear the same event, but their interpretation of it can be as different as night and day, depending on what they had expected the stimulus to be. In one study, children aged three to five who ate McDonald's French fries served in a McDonald's bag overwhelmingly thought they tasted better than those who ate the same fries out of a plain white bag. Even carrots tasted better when they came out of a McDonald's bag—more than half the kids preferred them to the same carrots served in a plain package! Ronald would be proud.[79]

The meaning we assign to a stimulus depends on the **schema**, or set of beliefs, to which we assign it. This in turn leads us to compare the stimulus to other similar ones we encountered in the past. Identifying and evoking the correct schema is crucial to many marketing decisions because this determines what criteria consumers will use to evaluate the product, package, or message. Extra Strength Maalox Whip Antacid flopped even though a spray can is a pretty effective way to deliver the product. To consumers, aerosol whips mean dessert toppings, not medication.[80] When a college cafeteria gave menu items descriptive labels (e.g., Red Beans with Rice versus Traditional Cajun Red Beans with Rice, Chocolate Pudding versus Satin Chocolate Pudding) so that diners had more information about each option so they could more easily categorize it, sales increased by more than 25 percent.[81]

The location of a product's image on a package influences the way our brains make sense of it. For example, as a result of what we have learned about the law of gravity (heavy objects sink and light objects float), we assume that products that are lower down in a frame weigh more than products that appear higher in a frame. In addition, objects on the right of a frame appear heavier than products that appear on the left of a frame. This interpretation results from our intuition about levers: We know that the farther away an object is from a lever's fulcrum, the more difficult it is to raise the item. Because we read from left to right, the left naturally becomes the visual fulcrum and thus we perceive objects on the right as heavier. Manufacturers should bear these *package schematics* in mind because they may influence our feelings about the contents in a package for better or worse. Think, for example, about a diet food marketer who wants shoppers to regard menu items as lighter in calorie count.[82]

As we'll see in Chapter 7, products often assume a "brand personality" because we tend to assign them common human traits such as sophistication or sexiness. In other words, we *anthropomorphize* objects when we think of them in human terms, and this thought process may encourage us to evaluate products using schemas we apply to classify other people. A recent study illustrates how this works: Subjects saw an advertisement with a picture of a car that had been modified to make it appear as though it was either "smiling" or "frowning." In some cases, the text of the ad was written in the first person, to activate a human schema, whereas others saw the same ad written in the third person. When the human schema was active, those who saw the "smiling" car rated it more favorably than when they saw a "frowning" car.[83]

OBJECTIVE 3-3
The field of semiotics helps us to understand how marketers use symbols to create meaning.

Stimulus Organization

One factor that determines how we will interpret a stimulus is the relationship we assume it has with other events, sensations, or images in memory. When RJR Nabisco introduced a version of Teddy Grahams (a children's product) for adults, it used understated packaging colors to reinforce the idea that the new product was for grown-ups. But sales were disappointing. Nabisco changed the box to bright yellow to convey the idea that this was a fun snack, and buyers' more positive association between a bright primary color and taste prompted adults to start buying the cookies.[84]

The stimuli we perceive are often ambiguous. It's up to us to determine the meaning based on our past experiences, expectations, and needs. A classic experiment demonstrated the process of "seeing what you want to see": Princeton and Dartmouth students separately viewed a movie of a particularly rough football game between the two rival schools. Although everyone was exposed to the same stimulus, the degree



We recognize patterns of stimuli, such as familiar words. In this Austrian ad consumers will tend to see the word "kitchen" even though the letters are scrambled.
Source: Demner, Merlicek & Bergmann Werbegesellschaft mbH.

to which students saw infractions and the blame they assigned for those they did see depended on which college they attended.[85]

As this experiment demonstrates, we tend to project our own desires or assumptions onto products and advertisements. This interpretation process can backfire for marketers. Planters LifeSavers Company found this out when it introduced Planters Fresh Roast, a vacuum-packed peanuts package. The idea was to capitalize on consumers' growing love affair with fresh-roast coffee by emphasizing the freshness of the nuts in the same way. A great idea—until irate supermarket managers began calling to ask who was going to pay to clean the peanut gook out of their stores' coffee-grinding machines.[86]

Interpretational Biases: The Eye of the Beholder

Our brains tend to relate incoming sensations to others already in memory, based on some fundamental organizational principles. These principles derive from *Gestalt psychology*, a school of thought based upon the notion that people interpret meaning from the *totality* of a set of stimuli rather than from any individual stimulus. The German word **Gestalt** roughly means *whole, pattern*, or *configuration*, and we summarize this term as "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." A piecemeal perspective that analyzes each component of the stimulus separately can't capture the total effect. The Gestalt perspective provides several principles that relate to the way our brains organize stimuli:

- The **closure principle** states that people tend to perceive an incomplete picture as complete. That is, we tend to fill in the blanks based on our prior experience. This principle explains why most of us have no trouble reading a neon sign even if several of its letters are burned out. The principle of closure is also at work when we hear only part of a jingle or theme. Marketing strategies that use the closure principle encourage audience participation, which increases the chance that people will attend to the message.
- The **similarity principle** tells us that consumers tend to group together objects that share similar physical characteristics. Green Giant relied on this principle when the company redesigned the packaging for its line of frozen vegetables. It created a "sea of green" look to unify all of its different offerings.
- The **figure-ground principle** states that one part of a stimulus will dominate (the *figure*), and other parts recede into the background (the *ground*). This concept is easy



Many company logos use the figure-ground principle. Do you see the arrow embedded inside the FedEx logo?
Source: Harry Thomas Flower/Shutterstock.

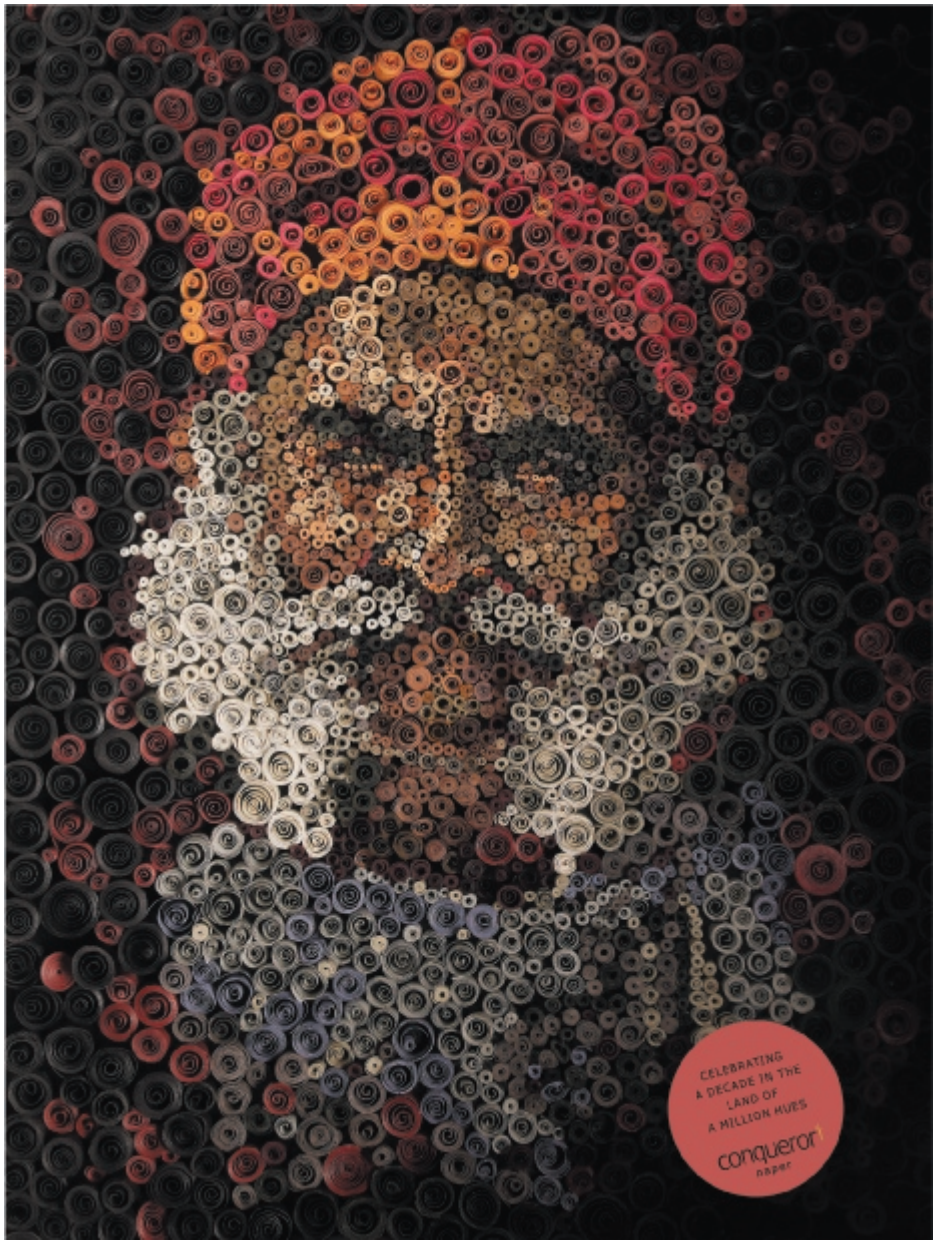
to understand if you think literally of a photograph with a clear and sharply focused object (the figure) in the center. The figure is dominant, and the eye goes straight to it. The parts of the configuration a person will perceive as figure or ground can vary depending on the individual consumer, as well as other factors. Similarly, marketing messages that use the figure-ground principle can make a stimulus the focal point of the message or merely the context that surrounds the focus.

Semiotics: The Meaning of Meaning

As we've seen, when we try to "make sense" of a marketing stimulus we interpret it in light of our prior associations. An experiment demonstrated how our assumptions influence our experiences; in this case, the study altered beer drinkers' taste preferences simply by telling them different stories about a specific brew's ingredients. The researcher offered bar patrons free beer if they would participate in a taste test (guess what: few refused the offer). Participants tasted two beers each, one a regular draft of Budweiser or Samuel Adams and the other the same beer with a few drops of balsamic vinegar added. Although most beer *aficionados* would guess that vinegar makes the drink taste bad, in fact 60 percent of the respondents who did not know which beer contained the vinegar actually preferred the doctored version to the regular one! But when tasters knew in advance which beer had vinegar in it before they took a swig, only one-third preferred that version.[87]

Much of the meaning we take away influences what we make of the symbolism we perceive. After all, on the surface many marketing images have virtually no literal connection to actual products. What does a cowboy have to do with a bit of tobacco rolled into a paper tube? How can a celebrity such as the basketball player LeBron James or the singer Rihanna enhance the image of a soft drink or a fast-food restaurant?

To help them understand how consumers interpret the meanings of symbols, some marketers turn to **semiotics**, a discipline that studies the correspondence between signs and symbols and their roles in how we assign meanings.[88] Semiotics is a key link to consumer behavior because consumers use products to express their social identities. Products carry learned meanings, and we rely on marketers to help us figure out what those meanings are. As one set of researchers put it, "Advertising serves as a kind



This Indian ad for paper products relies on the principle of similarity to create an image of a man.
Source: Courtesy of Taproot Dentsu India Communication Pvt. Ltd.

of culture/consumption dictionary; its entries are products, and their definitions are cultural meanings."[89]

From a semiotic perspective, every marketing message has three basic components: an *object*, a *sign* (or symbol), and an *interpretant.* The **object** is the product that is the focus of the message (e.g., Marlboro cigarettes). The **sign** is the sensory image that represents the intended meanings of the object (e.g., the Marlboro cowboy). The **interpretant** is the meaning we derive from the sign (e.g., rugged, individualistic, American). Figure 3.4 diagrams this relationship.

According to semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce, signs relate to objects in one of three ways: They can resemble objects, connect to them, or tie to them conventionally. An **icon** is a sign that resembles the product in some way (e.g., the Ford Mustang has a galloping horse on the hood). An **index** is a sign that connects to a product because they share some property (e.g., the pine tree on some of Procter & Gamble's Spic and Span cleanser products conveys the shared property of fresh scent). A **symbol** is a sign that

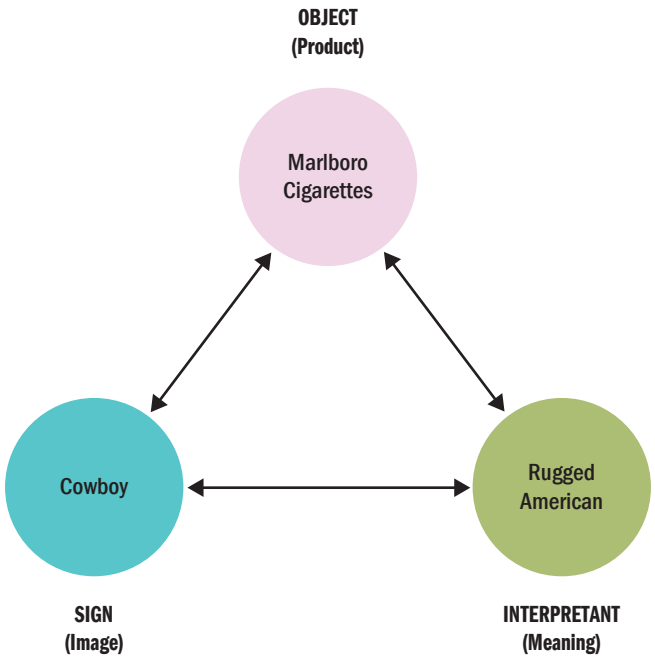


Figure 3.4 SEMIOTIC RELATIONSHIPS

relates to a product by either conventional or agreed-on associations (e.g., the lion in Dreyfus Fund ads provides the conventional association with fearlessness and strength that it carries [or hopes to carry] over to the company's approach to investments).[90]

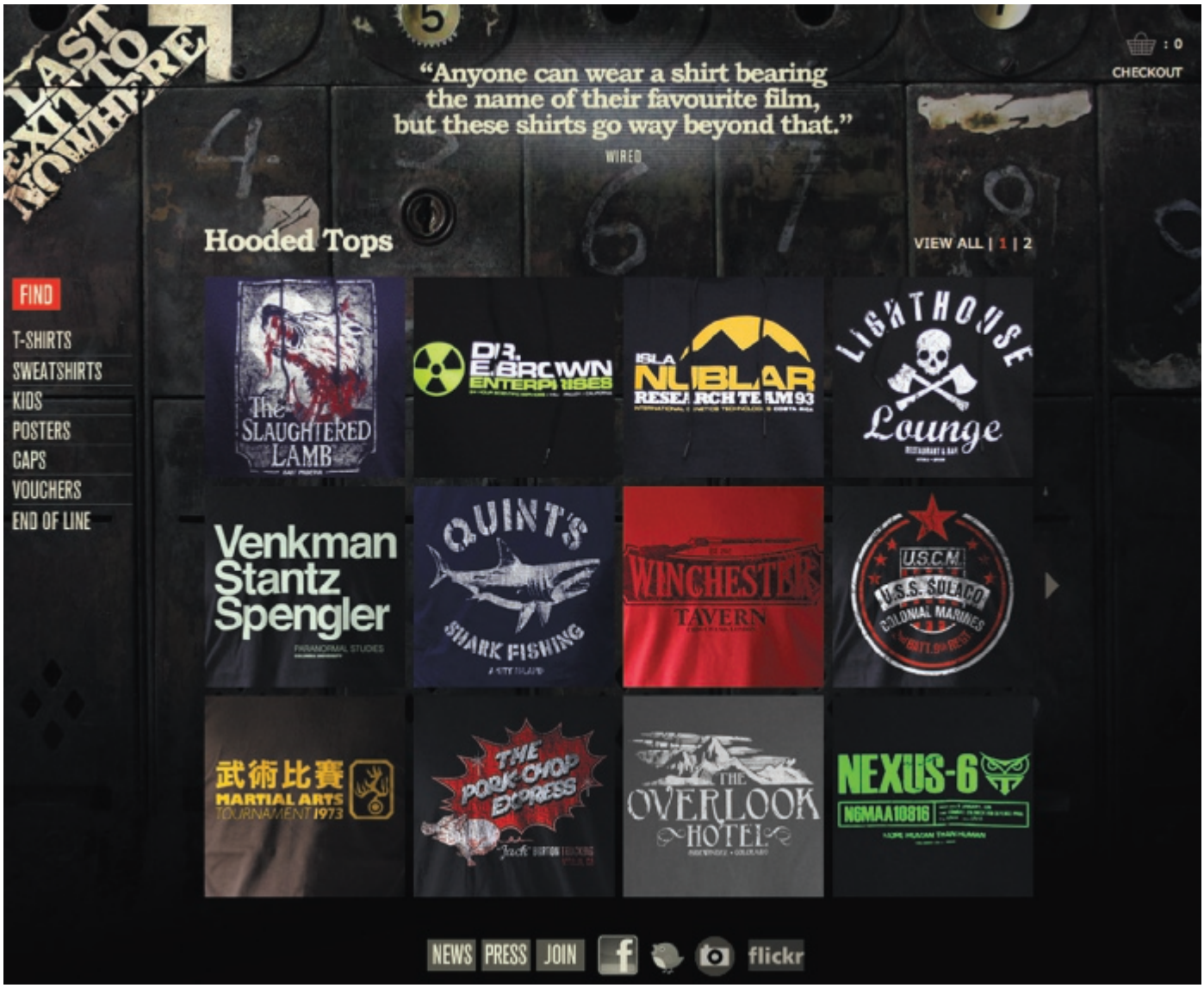
A lot of time, thought, and money go into creating brand names and logos that clearly communicate a product's image (even when a name like Exxon is generated by a computer!). Starbucks removed the words *Starbucks Coffee* as it introduced a new logo that features only the famous mermaid character. The CEO explained this change means the company is thinking "beyond coffee."[91]

What's Your Emoji?

The small digital icons we call **emojis** are the latest kind of symbolism that is capturing the imagination of many consumers—and companies as well. These images allow the sender to express feelings using a semiotic shorthand. Because they are visual, they allow us to communicate with those who don't speak our language. Many of us use Bitmoji or Snapchat software to craft our own versions. By one estimate we send over six billion every day! Marketers are getting in the act as well. There is even an emoji for "safe sex"; a tiny condom that the manufacturer Durex launched. A campaign to persuade the organization that sets standards for emojis has prompted more than 210 million mentions on Twitter. Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Starbucks, Disney, and more than a dozen other companies have each paid Twitter more than $1 million for designs combined with various kinds of ads. During a recent Super Bowl, people who used the hashtag #PepsiHalftime got a reply that included a soda can emoji with musical notes floating out from it. Domino's Pizza lets people order a pie by tweeting a pizza slice emoji. IHOP Restaurants even redesigned its logo in the emoji style. But, you can take it too far: Chevrolet confused many people when the company sent out a news release written entirely in emojis.[92]

Hyperreality

Perhaps you recall a recent Budweiser Super Bowl commercial that was set in "Whatever, U.S.A." The action took place in a small town with blue streets, light poles, and

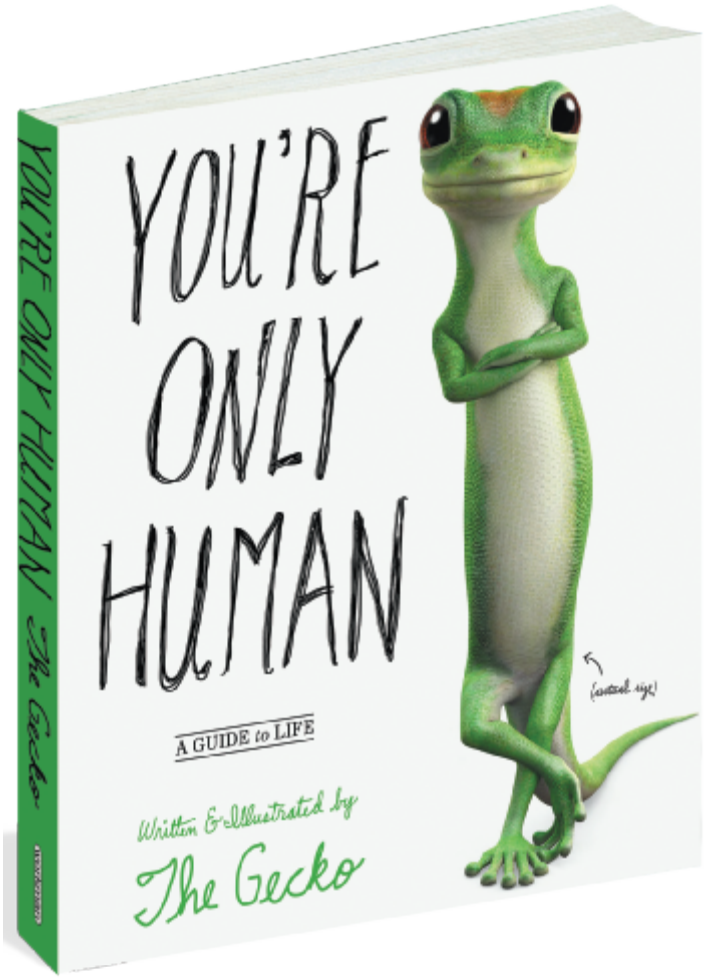


Last Exit to Nowhere sells T-shirts that bear the logos of companies featured in works of fiction.
Source: Courtesy of LastExitToNowhere.com.

fencing—not to mention a hot tub, sand pit, and concert stage smack in the middle of the main street surrounded by hordes of young partiers. In reality, the company paid the ski town of Crested Butte, Colorado, a cool half-million dollars to let it redo the place for a weekend and fly in 1,000 revelers to film a Bud Light commercial. That amount was double the original offer—after many residents pushed back at Budweiser's plan to rent out their town.[93]

Not ringing a bell? How about the town of Mount Airy in North Carolina near the Virginia border? It was the inspiration for the mythical town of Mayberry in "The Andy Griffith Show." To attract tourists, the town has slowly transformed itself into the TV town: If you visit the Mayberry Motor Inn, an Aunt Bee look-alike will show you around. You can tour around in a vintage police car like the one that Sheriff Andy Taylor drove (Andy Griffith was born in Mount Airy). If you're lucky you'll stumble on the actress who played Thelma Lou in the original show; she still signs autographs.[94]

One of the hallmarks of modern advertising is that it creates a condition of **hyperreality**. This refers to the process of making real what is initially simulation or "hype." Advertisers create new relationships between objects and interpretants when



A book supposedly written by the fictional GEICO gecko illustrates hyperreality.
Source: All text and images are copyrighted with permission from GEICO.

they invent connections between products and benefits, such as when an ad equates Marlboro cigarettes with the American frontier spirit. In a hyperreal environment, over time it's no longer possible to discern the true relationship between the symbol and reality. The "artificial" associations between product symbols and the real world take on lives of their own.

We see this a lot lately when fans create products that correspond to "realities" that never actually existed. These include Pinterest Boards for food mentioned in the steamy novel *Fifty Shades of Grey, The Unofficial Mad Men Cookbook*, *The Unofficial Harry Potter Cookbook*, *The Unofficial Narnia Cookbook*, *A Feast of Ice and Fire* (Game of Thrones), *and Abbey Cooks Entertain* (Downton Abbey).[95] Even the fictional GEICO gecko has published a book titled *You're Only Human: A Guide to Life* that covers a range of topics from tattooing to flossing.[96]

Perceptual Positioning

So, we know that we often interpret a product stimulus in light of what we've learned about a product category and the characteristics of existing brands. Our perception of a brand comprises both its functional attributes (e.g., its features, its price, and so on) and its symbolic attributes (its image and what we think it says about us when we use it). We'll look more closely at issues such as brand image in later chapters, but for now it's important to keep in mind that (as we stated in Chapter 1) our evaluation of a product typically is the result of what it means rather than what it does.

This meaning—as consumers perceive it—constitutes the product's market position, and it may have more to do with our expectations of product performance as communicated by its color, packaging, or styling than with the product itself.

When a marketer understands how consumers think about a set of competing brands, it can use these insights to develop a **positioning strategy**, which is a fundamental component of a company's marketing efforts as it uses elements of the marketing mix (i.e., product design, price, distribution, and marketing communications) to influence the consumer's interpretation of its meaning in the marketplace relative to its competitors. For example, although consumers' preferences for the taste of one product over another are important, this functional attribute is only one component of product evaluation.

Marketers can use many dimensions to carve out a brand's position in the marketplace. These include:[97]

- **Lifestyle.** Grey Poupon mustard is a "higher-class" condiment.
- **Price leadership.** L'Oréal sells its Noisôme brand face cream in upscale beauty shops, whereas its Plenitude brand is available for one-sixth the price in discount stores—even though both are based on the same chemical formula.[98]
- **Attributes.** Bounty paper towels are "the quicker picker-upper."
- **Product class.** The Spyder Eclipse is a sporty convertible.
- **Competitors.** Northwestern Insurance is "the quiet company."
- **Occasions.** Wrigley's gum is an alternative at times when smoking is not permitted.
- **Users.** Levi's Dockers target men in their 20s to 40s.
- **Quality.** At Ford, "Quality is job 1."

MyLab Marketing

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. **Products and commercial messages often appeal to our senses, but because of the profusion of these messages we don't notice most of them.**

   Marketing stimuli have important sensory qualities. We rely on colors, odors, sounds, tastes, and even the "feel" of products when we evaluate them. Not all sensations successfully make their way through the perceptual process. Many stimuli compete for our attention, and we don't notice or accurately interpret the majority of them.

2. **Perception is a three-stage process that translates raw stimuli into meaning.**

   Perception is the process by which physical sensations, such as sights, sounds, and smells, are selected, organized, and interpreted. The eventual interpretation of a stimulus allows it to be assigned meaning. A perceptual map is a widely used marketing tool that evaluates the relative standing of competing brands along relevant dimensions.

   So-called subliminal persuasion and related techniques that expose people to visual and aural messages below the sensory threshold are controversial. Although evidence that subliminal persuasion is effective is virtually nonexistent, many consumers continue to believe that advertisers use this technique. Some of the factors that determine which stimuli (above the threshold level) do get perceived include the amount of exposure to the stimulus, how much attention it generates, and how it is interpreted. In an increasingly crowded stimulus environment, advertising clutter occurs when too many marketing-related messages compete for attention.

   We don't attend to a stimulus in isolation. We classify and organize it according to principles of perceptual organization. A *Gestalt*, or overall pattern, guides these

principles. Specific grouping principles include closure, similarity, and figure-ground relationships. The final step in the process of perception is interpretation. Symbols help us make sense of the world by providing us with an interpretation of a stimulus that others often share. The degree to which the symbolism is consistent with our previous experience affects the meaning we assign to related objects.

3. The field of semiotics helps us to understand how marketers use symbols to create meaning.

Marketers try to communicate with consumers by creating relationships between their products or services and desired attributes. A semiotic analysis involves the correspondence between stimuli and the meaning of signs. The intended meaning may be literal (e.g., an icon such as a street sign with a picture of children playing). Or it may be indexical if it relies on shared characteristics (e.g., the red in a stop sign means danger). Meaning also can be conveyed by a symbol in which an image is given meaning by convention or by agreement of members of a society (e.g., stop signs are octagonal, whereas yield signs are triangular). Marketer-created associations often take on lives of their own as consumers begin to believe that hype is, in fact, real. We call this condition *hyperreality*.

KEY TERMS

Absolute threshold, 83
Adaptation, 90
Attention, 88
Audio watermark, 79
Augmented reality (AR), 81
Cellphone zombie, 88
Closure principle, 95
Color forecasts, 78
Contrast, 91
Differential threshold, 83
Embeds, 86
Emojis, 98
Endowment effect, 79
Exposure, 83
Eyeball economy, 88
Figure-ground principle, 95
Gastrophysics, 80
Gestalt, 95
Golden triangle, 92
Haptic, 80
Hyperreality, 99
Icon, 97
Index, 97
Interpretant, 97
Interpretation, 93
Just noticeable difference (j.n.d), 83
Kansei engineering, 80
Media snacker, 88
Mindfulness, 88
Multitasking, 89
Natural user interface, 79
Object, 97
Perception, 74
Perceptual defense, 90
Perceptual selection, 90
Perceptual vigilance, 90
Positioning strategy, 101
Psychophysics, 83
Rich media, 90
Schema, 94
Semiotics, 96
Sensation, 74
Sensory marketing, 74
Sensory overload, 88
Sensory threshold, 83
Sign, 97
Similarity principle, 95
Sound symbolism, 79
Subliminal perception, 85
Symbol, 97
Trade dress, 77
Weber's Law, 84

REVIEW

3-1 How does the sense of touch influence consumers' reactions to products?
3-2 Identify and describe the three stages of perception.
3-3 What is the difference between an absolute threshold and a differential threshold?
3-4 Does subliminal perception work? Why or why not?
3-5 Describe two factors that can lead to stimulus adaptation.
3-6 "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Explain this statement.
3-7 List the three semiotic components of a marketing message, giving an example of each.
3-8 What do we mean by the concept of augmented reality? Give an example that is not discussed in the chapter. How does this concept differ from virtual reality?
3-9 What is a positioning strategy? What are some ways marketers can position their products?

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

3-10 Assuming that some forms of subliminal persuasion may have the desired effect of influencing consumers, do you think the use of these techniques is ethical? Explain your answer.

3-11 The slogan for the movie *Godzilla* was "Size does matter." Should this be the slogan for the United States as well? Many marketers seem to believe so. The average serving size for a fountain drink has gone from 12 ounces to 20 ounces. An industry consultant explains that the 32-ounce Big Gulp is so popular because "people like something large in their hands. The larger the better." Some cities (most notably New York) have tried to ban sales of sugary drinks greater than 24 ounces but so far unsuccessfully.[99] Hardee's Monster Burger, complete with two beef patties and five pieces of bacon, weighs in at 63 grams of fat and more than 1,000 calories. The standard for TV sets used to be 19 inches; now it's 32 inches and growing. Hulking sport utility vehicles (SUVs) have replaced tiny sports cars as the status vehicle of the new millennium. What's up with our fascination with bigness? Is this a uniquely U.S. preference? Do you believe that "bigger is better"? Is this a sound marketing strategy?

3-12 Augmented reality applications may reach the level of sophistication where we observe almost everything through the screen of our smartphones to receive an "enhanced" experience. Do you view this as a positive development or a problem?

3-13 The chapter notes that marketers may elect to shrink the amount of product it sells and maintain the same price rather than raise the price. Is this ethical?

3-14 Define a *schema* and provide an example of how this concept is relevant to marketing.

▶ APPLY

3-15 Interview three to five male and three to five female friends about their perceptions of both men's and women's fragrances. Construct a perceptual map for each set of products. Based on your map of perfumes, do you see any areas that are not adequately served by current offerings? What (if any) gender differences did you notice regarding both the relevant dimensions raters use and how they place specific brands along these dimensions?

3-16 Using magazines archived in the library, track the packaging of a specific brand over time. Find an example of gradual changes in package design that may have been below the j.n.d.

3-17 Visit a set of websites for one type of product (e.g., personal computers, perfumes, laundry detergents, or athletic shoes) and analyze the colors and other design principles they employ. Which sites "work" and which don't? Why? Look through a current magazine and select one ad that captures your attention over the others. Explain why this ad attracts you.

3-18 Find ads that use the techniques of contrast and novelty. Give your opinion of the effectiveness of each ad and whether the technique is likely to be appropriate for the consumers the ad targets.

3-19 Assume that you are a consultant for a marketer who wants to design a package for a new premium chocolate bar targeted to an affluent market. What recommendations would you provide in terms of such package elements as color, symbolism, and graphic design? Give the reasons for your suggestions.

CASE STUDY The Brave New World of Subway Advertising

What do McDonald's, HBO, Unilever, Intel, Acer, Netflix, Microsoft, Shell, Paramount, Coca-Cola, and Universal have in common?[100] They all break through the clutter of traditional ad spaces to grab the attention of potential customers. And in the process, they dazzle people right out of the boredom of riding the subway.

Subway advertising has been around nearly as long as the subway itself. But Vancouver-based advertising media pioneer adtrackmedia gives the old venue a different twist. By employing an innovative technology similar to that of a childhood flip book, the agency illuminates dark subway tunnels and turns them into valuable showcases for major advertisers.[101]

At the core of this method is a series of lit panels that contain static images. The panels occupy space that normally contains only graffiti, grime, and the occasional rat. When you view one from a standstill, it appears as a simple still image. But when a subway train passes by, the series comes to life for riders as a 15- to 30-second full-motion commercial. If you don't live near one of the subways using this technology, you can check out the video at adtrackmedia.com.[102]

Having just another place to air a commercial might not seem so appealing to advertisers. But in a media environment where consumers increasingly skip or fast-forward through ads, the placement of these messages in subway tunnels presents exceptional possibilities. Advertisers clamor for opportunities to break through the clutter. Because these ads are really unique, they're likely to grab the attention of even the most jaded commuter. Branding expert Tony Chapman says, "Millions upon millions of people ride the metro every day. All of a sudden the subway tunnel comes to life with great advertising. That is the kind of marketing that we need in the future to make sure that brands can still engage their consumer at the speed of life."[103]

But the uniqueness of this medium is only part of the formula that makes these ad agencies believe they're on to something. The rest is based on the nature of the subway audience: captive and bored.[104] "Our riders' reactions oscillated between surprise and curiosity. It certainly brought a positive experience to our riders, bringing some fun and making the trip more pleasant,"[105] said Harald Zwetkoff, President of ViaQuatro, the metro service of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Whether it's because the ads give a bored audience something to do or because this new wave of out-of-home advertisements is truly cutting-edge, industry officials claim that the public reaction has been overwhelmingly positive. In a test of the service in Madrid, two out of three riders remembered seeing the tested campaign, with over 44 percent rating the ad as "original." Over 58 percent said that the ads made them stop and look. Most important, 34.3 percent reported that the ads made them more likely to buy some of the brand being advertised through this innovative medium.[106]

The novelty of the technology is part of the magic of this approach to communicating with consumers. Client Antonio Selles, Director of Marketing of shampoo producer Garnier, said that the values of the medium—notoriety, surprise, and modernity—were transferred to his product. He also noted that the ads generated some buzz on social media, multiplying the value of his ad spend.[107]

Results like these make it easy to believe the claims of underground advertising agencies. In one ad test with Dasani bottled water, Coca-Cola found that 93 percent of consumers remembered a subway-advertised product, whereas only 13 percent had that same level of recall for televisions ads.[108] This means big ad revenues, and not just for the agencies that create these messages. Mass transit organizations potentially can realize a big source of secondary income when they lease out this unused real estate. In a two-year trial with adtrackmedia, Madrid (Spain) Metro hoped that subway tunnel ads installed between two of their stations would add €400,000 of advertising income to their bottom line.[109]

Currently, brightening the tunnels of numerous mass transit systems in North and South America, Asia, and Europe, these subterranean animations represent something every advertiser dreams of: an ad that people go out of their way to look at.[110] In a world that is increasingly skeptical about too much advertising, this new platform is an express ride to success.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 3-1 Based on the principles of attention the chapter presents, explain why riders receive these ads so positively. Be sure to consider the possible stimulus selection factors that apply.

CS 3-2 It has been shown that consumers can habituate to a stimulus. Is there anything the ads' creators should know about adaptation and its potential impact on the success of these ads over time?

CS 3-3 As you consider the companies that have used tunnel advertising, are there brands or products that would not be a good fit for this medium? Be prepared to justify your response with examples.

MyLab Marketing

If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

3-20 Many studies have shown that our sensory detection abilities decline as we grow older. Discuss the implications of the absolute threshold for marketers who want to appeal to the older consumer.

3-21 The chapter discussed the "talking window," which a German ad agency is placing in subway cars. When the agency posted a YouTube video to promote the platform, one person commented, "At what point does it stop being advertising and start being harassment?" How would you answer this question?[111]

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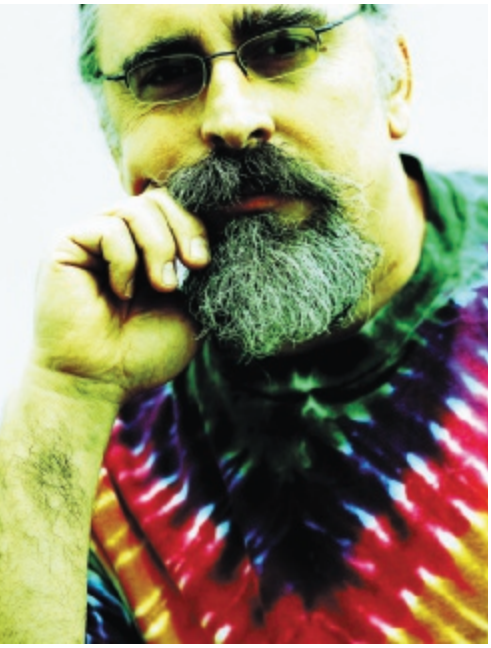
4 Learning and Memory

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why

4-1 Conditioning results in learning.

4-2 We learn about products by observing others' behavior.

4-3 Our brains process information about brands to retain them in memory.



Source: PHOTOS.com/Getty Images.

Oh, Sunday morning! The sun is shining, the birds are singing, and Joe is feeling groovy! He puts on his vintage Levi's 501 jeans (circa 1968) and his Woodstock T-shirt (the "real" Woodstock, not that fake abomination they put out more recently, thank you) and saunters down to the kitchen. Joe smiles in anticipation of his morning plans. He's just returned from his college reunion and now it's time to "process" all the people he's seen and the stories he heard about their old antics. Joe cranks up the Lava Lamp, throws a Grateful Dead record on the turntable (ah, the sublime joys of vinyl), and sits back on his Barcalounger as he clutches a huge bowl filled to the brim with his all-time favorite cereal, Cap'n Crunch. Let the memories begin!

OBJECTIVE 4-1
Conditioning results in learning.

How Do We Learn?

Joe journeys through time with the aid of many products that make him feel good because they remind him of earlier parts of his life. Products have capitalized on this nostalgia, too. PepsiCo launched its "Throwback" campaign; now it sells Pepsi Throwback, Mountain Dew Throwback, and Doritos Taco-Flavored chips in authentic packages from the past. Hostess brought back its 1970s characters Twinkie the Kid, Captain CupCake, King Ding Dong, and Happy Ho Ho to adorn its snack cake packages. An H&M video features supermodel Naomi Campbell lip-syncing a song by 90s group WHAM! (featuring the late George Michael). As a PepsiCo marketing executive explained, "Retro is very cool with 20-somethings, because it ties in with their desire for simpler, cleaner, more authentic lives. Many of them are engaged in identity self-creation through their Facebook pages, Instagram, Twitter and other social media, and they see nostalgia as a way to differentiate themselves."[1]

Learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior caused by experience. The learner need not have the experience directly, however; we can also learn when we observe events that affect others.[2] We learn even when we don't try: We recognize many brand names and hum many product jingles, for example, even for products we don't personally use. We call this casual, unintentional acquisition of knowledge **incidental learning**.

Learning is an ongoing process. Our knowledge about the world constantly updates as we are exposed to new stimuli and as we receive ongoing feedback that allows us to modify our behavior when we find ourselves in similar situations at a

later time. The concept of learning covers a lot of ground, ranging from a consumer's simple association between a stimulus such as a product logo (e.g., Coca-Cola) and a response (e.g., "refreshing soft drink") to a complex series of cognitive activities (e.g., writing an essay on learning for a consumer behavior exam).

Psychologists who study learning advance several theories to explain the learning process. These theories range from those that focus on simple stimulus–response connections (*behavioral theories*) to perspectives that regard consumers as solvers of complex problems who learn abstract rules and concepts when they observe what others say and do (*cognitive theories*). It's important for marketers to understand these theories as well, because basic learning principles are at the heart of many consumer purchase decisions.

Behavioral Learning Theories

Behavioral learning theories assume that learning takes place as the result of responses to external events. Psychologists who subscribe to this viewpoint do not focus on internal thought processes. Instead, they approach the mind as a "black box" and emphasize the observable aspects of behavior. The observable aspects consist of things that go into the box (the stimuli or events perceived from the outside world) and things that come out of the box (the responses, or reactions to these stimuli).

Two major approaches to learning represent this view: *classical conditioning* and *instrumental conditioning*. According to the behavioral learning perspective, the feedback we receive as we go through life shapes our experiences. Similarly, we respond to brand names, scents, jingles, and other marketing stimuli because of the learned connections we form over time. People also learn that actions they take result in rewards and punishments; this feedback influences the way they will respond in similar situations in the future. Consumers who receive compliments on a product choice will be more likely to buy that brand again, whereas those who get food poisoning at a new restaurant are not likely to patronize that restaurant in the future.

Classical Conditioning

Classical conditioning occurs when a stimulus that elicits a response is paired with another stimulus that initially does not elicit a response on its own. Over time, this second stimulus causes a similar response because we associate it with the first stimulus. Ivan Pavlov, a Russian physiologist who conducted research on digestion in animals, first demonstrated this phenomenon in dogs. Pavlov induced classically conditioned learning when he paired a neutral stimulus (a bell) with a stimulus known to cause a salivation response in dogs (he squirted dried meat powder into their mouths). The powder was an **unconditioned stimulus (UCS)** because it was naturally capable of causing the response. Over time, the bell became a **conditioned stimulus (CS)**; it did not initially cause salivation, but the dogs learned to associate the bell with the meat powder and began to salivate at the sound of the bell only. The drooling of these canine consumers because of a sound, now linked to feeding time, was a **conditioned response (CR)**.

This basic form of classical conditioning that Pavlov demonstrated primarily applies to responses to visual and olfactory cues that induce hunger, thirst, sexual arousal, and other basic drives. When marketers consistently pair these cues with conditioned stimuli, such as brand names, consumers may learn to feel hungry, thirsty, or aroused when they encounter these brand cues at a later point.

Classical conditioning can have similar effects for more complex reactions, too. Even a credit card becomes a conditioned cue that triggers greater spending, especially because as a stimulus it's present only in situations where we spend money. People

Marketing Opportunity

Events we experience when we are young often exert a lasting influence on our preferences as we get older. Consider for example the lifelong impact on a fan when his team wins the World Series. An analysis used Facebook data on how many people "liked" and posted about a specific baseball team. It found that if a team wins the championship when a boy is eight years old, this significantly increases the probability he will support the team as an adult regardless of how well the team does every other year of his life (the data doesn't hold up for females). The pattern persists until age 14 when it starts falling off; a World Series winner when a man is 20 years old is only one-eighth as likely to create an adult fan as when he was eight years old. Thus, overall there are 1.65 Yankees fans for every Mets fan. However, the Mets' popularity spikes among those who were born in the years 1961 and 1978. It turns out that both sets of these fans happened to be eight years old when the Mets won the World Series. Maybe winning *is* everything.[3]

learn they can make larger purchases with credit cards, and they also leave larger tips than when they pay by cash.[4] Small wonder that American Express reminds us, "Don't leave home without it."

Conditioning effects are more likely to occur after the conditioned (CS) and unconditioned (UCS) stimuli have been paired a number of times.[5] Repeated exposures—**repetition**—increase the strength of stimulus–response associations and prevent the decay of these associations in memory. Some research indicates that the intervals between exposures may influence the effectiveness of this strategy as well as the type of medium the marketer uses; the most effective repetition strategy is a combination of spaced exposures that alternate in terms of media that are more and less involving, such as television advertising complemented by print media.[6]

Many classic advertising campaigns consist of product slogans that companies repeat so often they are etched in consumers' minds. Conditioning will not occur or will take longer if the CS is only occasionally paired with the UCS. One result of this lack of association is **extinction**, which happens when the effects of prior conditioning diminish and finally disappear. This can occur, for example, when a product is overexposed in the marketplace so that its original allure is lost. The Izod Lacoste polo shirt, with its distinctive crocodile crest, is a good example of this effect. When the once-exclusive crocodile started to appear on baby clothes and many other items, it lost its cachet. Other contenders, such as the Ralph Lauren polo player, successfully challenged it as a symbol of casual elegance. Now that Izod is being more careful about where its logo appears, the brand is starting to regain its "cool" in some circles.



Some advertising messages appeal to our motivation to avoid negative outcomes like bad breath. This Indian ad for a mint certainly does.
Source: Courtesy of McCann Erickson India.

Stimulus Generalization

Stimulus generalization refers to the tendency of stimuli similar to a CS to evoke similar, conditioned responses. For example, Pavlov noticed in subsequent studies that his dogs would sometimes salivate when they heard noises that only vaguely resembled a bell, such as keys jangling.

People also react to other, similar stimuli in much the same way they responded to the original stimulus; we call this generalization a **halo effect**. A drugstore's bottle of private-brand mouthwash that is deliberately packaged to resemble Listerine mouthwash may evoke a similar response among consumers, who assume that this "me-too" product shares other characteristics of the original. Indeed, consumers in one study of shampoo brands tended to rate those with similar packages as similar in quality and performance as well.[7] This "piggybacking" strategy can cut both ways: When the quality of the me-too product turns out to be lower than that of the original brand, consumers may exhibit even more positive feelings toward the original. However, if they perceive the quality of the two competitors to be about equal, consumers may conclude that the price premium they pay for the original is not worth it.[8]

Stimulus Discrimination

Stimulus discrimination occurs when a UCS does not follow a stimulus similar to a CS. When this happens, reactions weaken and will soon disappear. Part of the learning process involves making a response to some stimuli but not to other, similar stimuli. Manufacturers of well-established brands commonly urge consumers not to buy "cheap imitations" because the results will not be what they expect.

Marketing Applications of Classical Conditioning Principles

Behavioral learning principles apply to many consumer phenomena, such as when a marketer creates a distinctive brand image or links a product to an underlying need. The transfer of meaning from an unconditioned stimulus to a conditioned stimulus explains why "made-up" brand names, such as Marlboro, Coca-Cola, or Adidas, exert such powerful effects on consumers. The association between the Marlboro man and the cigarette is so strong that in some cases the company no longer even bothers to include the brand name in its ads that feature the cowboy riding off into the sunset. Indeed, recent research shows that these linkages cement early on; scans of children show how the pleasure and appetite centers of their brains light up when they view fast-food-company advertising images such as the McDonald's logo.[9]

When researchers pair *nonsense syllables* (meaningless sets of letters) with such evaluative words as *beauty* or *success*, the meaning transfers to the fake words. This change in the symbolic significance of initially meaningless words shows that fairly simple associations can condition even complex meanings, and the learning that results can last a long time.[10] These associations are crucial to many marketing strategies that rely on the creation and perpetuation of **brand equity**, in which a brand has strong positive associations in a consumer's memory and commands a lot of loyalty as a result.[11]

Marketing Applications of Repetition

One advertising researcher argued that any more than three exposures to a marketing communication are wasted. The first exposure creates awareness of the product, the second demonstrates its relevance to the consumer, and the third reminds him or her of the product's benefits.[12] However, even this bare-bones approach implies that we



Procter & Gamble opened a line of Tide Dry Cleaners, named after its bestselling laundry detergent. P&G will rely on the more than 800,000 Facebook fans of Tide (what else do these people "like" on Facebook?) and other loyal detergent users to trust their clothes to the franchise stores. P&G plans to infuse the stores and its dry cleaning fluids with the familiar Tide scent just to underscore the connection.
Source: Ed Zurga/Bloomberg/Getty Images.

need repetition to ensure that the consumer is actually exposed to (and processes) the message at least three times. As we've seen, this exposure is by no means guaranteed, because people tend to tune out or distort many marketing communications. Marketers who attempt to condition an association must ensure that the consumers they target will be exposed to the stimulus a sufficient number of times to make it "stick."

However, it is possible to have too much of a good thing. Consumers can become so used to hearing or seeing a marketing stimulus that they no longer pay attention to it. One solution is to create variations of the same basic message to alleviate this problem of **advertising wear-out**. Toyota ran a commercial featuring a reworked version of The Fixx's song "Saved by Zero" to promote its no-interest payment options so many times that close to 10,000 fed-up viewers organized a Facebook group to petition the company for mercy. As one worn-out group member posted, "There have been worse commercials, and there have been commercials that were played this often; but never before has a commercial this bad been aired so much."[13]

How often should an advertiser repeat the ads it places on websites? Recent research indicates that the answer depends on whether the ad relates to the website's content, and whether or not competing ads are also present on the site. The study found support for the general idea that repetitive ad messages resulted in higher recall and interest in learning more about the advertised product (in this case, a laptop). However, repeating the same ad was primarily effective when competitors also showed ads on the site. Otherwise, it was better to vary the ad messages for the laptop (presumably because people tuned out the ad if it appeared repeatedly). These ads were also more effective when they appeared on a site where the content related to the advertised product.[14]

Marketing Applications of Conditioned Product Associations

Advertisements often pair a product with a positive stimulus to create a desirable association. Various aspects of a marketing message, such as music, humor, or imagery, can affect conditioning. In one study, for example, subjects who viewed a slide of pens paired with either pleasant or unpleasant music were more likely later to select the pen that appeared with the pleasant music.[15]

Marketing Applications of Stimulus Generalization

The iconic (and deceased) reggae singer Bob Marley's name and image appears on a vast range of products, including caps, lanyards, T-shirts, rolling papers, handbags and purses, belts and buckles, beach towels, and knapsacks. His daughter Cedella launched High Tide swimwear to further extend the franchise, and his son Rohan created the Marley Coffee brand; each variety is named after a different Marley tune.[16]

The process of stimulus generalization often is central to branding and packaging decisions that try to capitalize on consumers' positive associations with an existing brand or company name. We clearly appreciate the value of this kind of linkage when we look at universities with winning sports teams: Loyal fans snap up merchandise, from clothing to bathroom accessories, emblazoned with the school's name. This business did not even exist 20 years ago when schools were reluctant to commercialize their images. Texas A&M was one of the first schools that even bothered to file for trademark protection, and that was only after someone put the Aggie logo on a line of handguns. Today it's a different story. Many college administrators crave the revenue they receive from sweatshirts, drink coasters, and even toilet seats emblazoned with school logos. Washington State University sells branded Wagyu beef raised by its staff and animal science students. It joins other college-branded delicacies, including Cornell Dairy Ice Cream and Texas A&M Jerky.[17]

Strategies that marketers base on stimulus generalization include:

- **Family branding**—Many products capitalize on the reputation of a company name. Companies such as Campbell's, Heinz, and General Electric rely on their positive corporate images to sell a variety of product lines.
- **Product line extension**—Marketers add related products to an established brand. Dole, which we associate with fruit, introduced refrigerated juices and juice bars, whereas Sun Maid went from raisins to raisin bread. The gun manufacturer Smith & Wesson launched its own line of furniture and other home items. Starbucks Corp. and Jim Beam Brands teamed up to make Starbucks Coffee Liqueur. Condé Nast is opening bars and clubs around the world linked to its *Vogue* and *GQ* magazines.[19]
- **Licensing**—Companies often "rent" well-known names, hoping that the learned associations they have forged will "rub off" onto other kinds of products. Zippo Manufacturing Co., long known for its "windproof" cigarette lighters, markets a men's fragrance—and no, it doesn't smell like lighter fluid.[20] The National Football League puts team logos on, well, just about everything.[21] Bentley lends its name to colognes, furniture, skis, handbags, and even a hotel suite that costs $10,500 a night at the St. Regis hotel in New York. The Ferrari prancing horse logo pops up on chess sets, Tod's loafers, and Oakley sunglasses.[22]
- **Look-alike packaging**—Distinctive packaging designs create strong associations with a particular brand. Companies that make generic or private-label brands and want to communicate a quality image often exploit this linkage when they put their products in packages similar to those of popular brands.[23] How does this strategy affect consumers' perceptions of the original brand? One study found that consumers tend to react positively to "copycat brands" as long as the imitator doesn't make grandiose claims that it can't fulfill.[24]

Of course, this strategy can make a lot of work for lawyers if the copycat brand gets *too* close to the original. Marketers of distinctive brands work hard to protect their designs and logos, and each year companies file numerous lawsuits in so-called *Lanham Act* cases that hinge on the issue of **consumer confusion**: How likely is it that one company's logo, product design, or package is so similar to another that



Bentley is among many luxury carmakers that is aggressively licensing its name in other product categories.[18]
Source: Courtesy of Bentley Motors Limited.

the typical shopper would mistake one for the other? Levi Strauss has sued almost 100 other apparel manufacturers that it claims have borrowed its trademark pocket design of a pentagon surrounding a drawing of a seagull in flight or its distinctive tab that it sews into its garments' vertical seams.[25]

Companies with a well-established brand image try to encourage stimulus discrimination when they promote the unique attributes of their brand—hence the constant reminders for American Express Travelers Cheques: "Ask for them by name." However, a brand name that a firm uses so widely that it is no longer distinctive becomes part of the public domain and competitors are free to borrow it: think of well-worn names such as aspirin, cellophane, yo-yo, escalator, and even google (which started as a noun and is now also a verb). This high degree of acceptance can be a tough barrier to jump when you're a competitor: Microsoft hopes that over time we will choose to "bing" rather than "google" when we want information.

Instrumental Conditioning

Instrumental conditioning (or *operant conditioning*) occurs when we learn to perform behaviors that produce positive outcomes and avoid those that yield negative outcomes. We most closely associate this learning process with the psychologist B. F. Skinner, who demonstrated the effects of instrumental conditioning by teaching pigeons and other animals to dance, play Ping-Pong, and perform other activities when he systematically rewarded them for desired behaviors.[26]

Whereas responses in classical conditioning are involuntary and fairly simple, we make those in instrumental conditioning deliberately to obtain a goal, and these may be more complex. We may learn the desired behavior over a period of time as a **shaping** process rewards our intermediate actions. For example, the owner of a new store may award prizes to shoppers who simply drop in; she hopes that over time they will continue to drop in and eventually even buy something.

Also, whereas classical conditioning involves the close pairing of two stimuli, instrumental learning occurs when a learner receives a reward *after* he or she performs the desired behavior. In these cases, learning takes place over time, while the learner attempts and abandons other behaviors that don't get reinforced. A good way to remember the difference is to keep in mind that in instrumental learning the person makes a response because it is *instrumental* to gain a reward or avoid a punishment. Over time, consumers come to associate with people who reward them and to choose products that make them feel good or satisfy some need.

Instrumental conditioning occurs in one of three ways:

1. When the environment provides **positive reinforcement** in the form of a reward, this strengthens the response and we learn the appropriate behavior. For example, a woman who gets compliments after wearing Obsession perfume learns that using this product has the desired effect, and she will be more likely to keep buying the product.
2. **Negative reinforcement** also strengthens responses so that we learn the appropriate behavior. A perfume company might run an ad showing a woman sitting home alone on a Saturday night because she did not wear its fragrance. The message this conveys is that she could have avoided this negative outcome if only she had used the perfume.
3. In contrast to situations where we learn to do certain things to avoid unpleasantness, **punishment** occurs when unpleasant events follow a response (such as when our friends ridicule us if we wear a nasty-smelling fragrance). We learn the hard way not to repeat these behaviors.



Positive reinforcement occurs after consumers try a new product and like it.
Source: Provided courtesy of Frito-Lay North America, Inc.

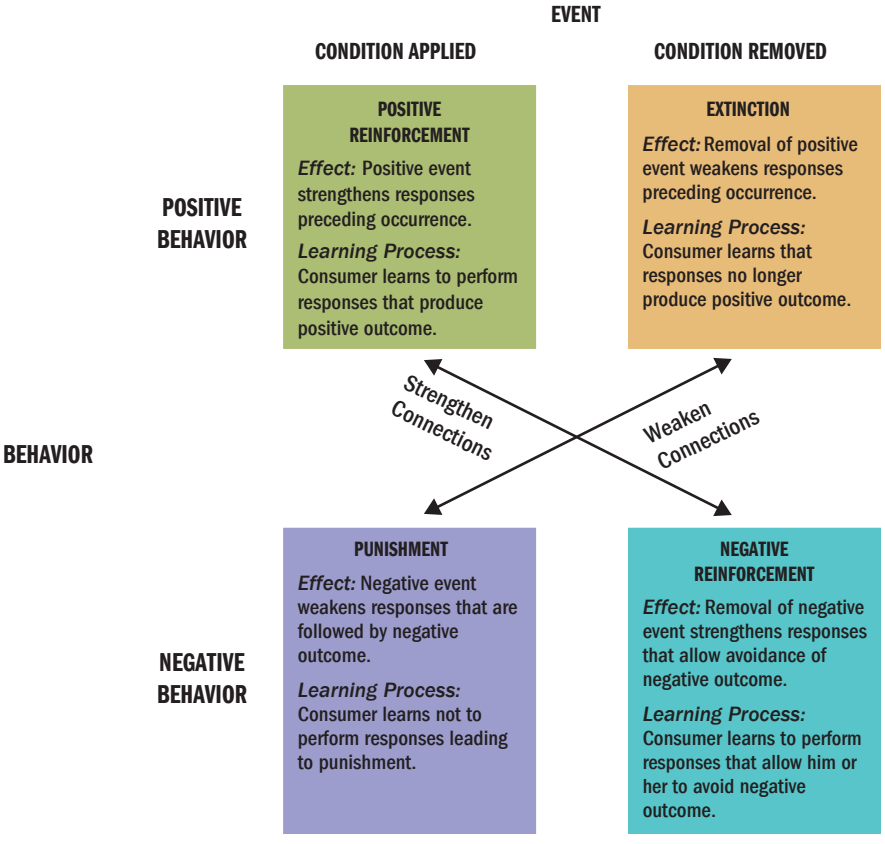
To help you understand the differences among these mechanisms, keep in mind that reactions from a person's environment to his or her behavior can be either positive or negative, and that marketers can either apply or remove these outcomes (or anticipated outcomes). That is, under conditions of both positive reinforcement and punishment, the person receives a reaction when he or she does something. In contrast, negative reinforcement occurs when the person avoids a negative outcome—the removal of something negative is pleasurable and hence is rewarding.

Finally, when a person no longer receives a positive outcome, *extinction* is likely to occur, and the learned stimulus–response connection will not be maintained (as when a woman no longer receives compliments on her perfume). Thus, positive and negative reinforcement strengthen the future linkage between a response and an outcome because of the pleasant experience. This tie is weakened under conditions of both punishment and extinction because of the unpleasant experience. Figure 4.1 will help you to "reinforce" the relationships among these four conditions.

It's important for marketers to determine the most effective reinforcement schedule to use. This decision relates to the amount of effort and resources they must devote when they reward consumers who respond as they hope to their requests. Several schedules are possible:

- **Fixed-interval reinforcement**—After a specified time period has passed, the first response you make brings the reward. Under such conditions, people tend to respond slowly right after they get reinforced, but their responses get faster as the time for the next reinforcement approaches. For example, consumers may crowd into a store for the last day of its seasonal sale and not reappear until the next one.

Figure 4.1 TYPES OF REINFORCEMENT





Casino operators program slot machines to deliver rewards on a variable-ratio reinforcement schedule. *Source:* Boggy/Fotolia.

- **Variable-interval reinforcement**—The time that must pass before you get reinforced varies based on some average. Because you don't know exactly when to expect the reinforcement, you have to respond at a consistent rate. This is the logic behind retailers' use of so-called *secret shoppers:* people who periodically test for service quality when they pose as customers at unannounced times. Because store employees never know exactly when to expect a visit, they must maintain high quality constantly "just in case."
- **Fixed-ratio reinforcement**—Reinforcement occurs only after a fixed number of responses. This schedule motivates you to continue performing the same behavior over and over. For example, you might keep buying groceries at the same store to earn a prize when you collect 50 register receipts.
- **Variable-ratio reinforcement**—You get reinforced after a certain number of responses, but you don't know how many responses are required. People in such situations tend to respond at high and steady rates, and this type of behavior is difficult to extinguish. This reinforcement schedule is responsible for consumers' attractions to slot machines. They learn that if they keep throwing money into the machine, they will eventually win something (if they don't go broke first).

Marketing Applications of Instrumental Conditioning Principles

Principles of instrumental conditioning are at work when a marketer rewards or punishes a consumer for a purchase decision. Businesspeople shape behavior when they gradually reinforce the appropriate actions consumers take. A car dealer might encourage a reluctant buyer to simply sit in a floor model, then suggest taking a test drive, and then try to close the deal.

Marketers have many ways to reinforce consumers' behaviors, ranging from a simple "thank you" after a purchase to substantial rebates and follow-up phone calls. For example, a life insurance company obtained a much higher rate of policy renewal among a group of new customers who received a thank-you letter after each payment, compared to a control group that did not receive any reinforcement.[27] **Frequency marketing** is a popular technique that rewards regular purchasers with prizes that get

better as they spend more. The airline industry pioneered this instrumental learning strategy when it introduced "frequent flyer" programs in the early 1980s to reward loyal customers. The practice has spread to many other businesses as well, ranging from grocery stores to casinos.

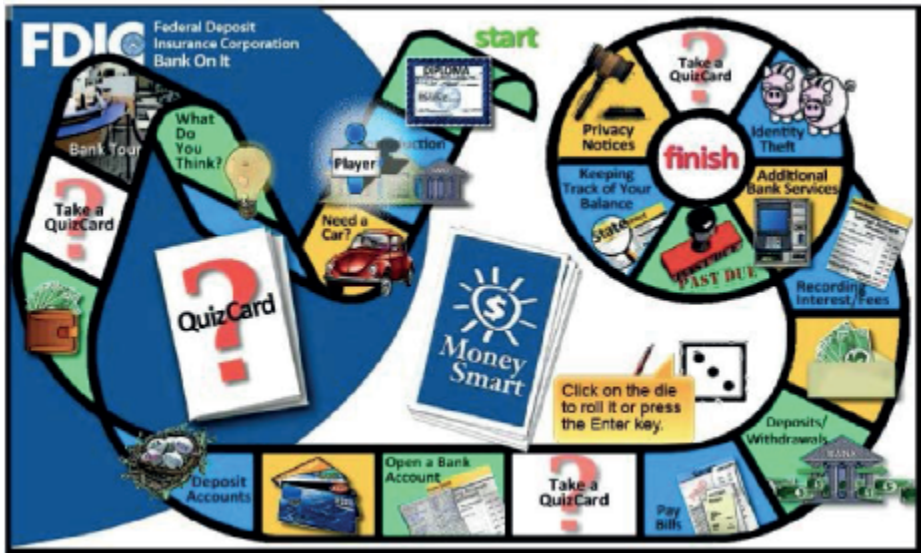
Gamification: The New Frontier for Learning Applications

Many of us grew up playing games, and some of us never stopped. In some sense, all of life is a game, insofar as there are winners and losers and challenges we must solve to reach various objectives. Many organizations are going to the next level; they're borrowing from basic principles of gaming to motivate consumers and employees across a broad spectrum of activity.

The fast-growing strategy of **gamification** turns routine actions into experiences as it adds gaming elements to tasks that might otherwise be boring or routine. Young people have grown up playing games; these activities structure their learning styles and influence the platforms to which they will gravitate.[28] Important elements of gaming include:

- A dynamic digital environment (whether in-store, on a laptop, or on a tablet or phone) that resembles a sophisticated videogame platform
- Multiple short- and long-term goals
- Rapid and frequent feedback
- A reward for most or all efforts in the form of a badge or a virtual product
- Friendly competition in a low-risk environment
- A manageable degree of uncertainty

At its most basic, gamification is simply about providing rewards to customers to encourage them to buy even more. These mechanisms used to take the form of buy-10-get-one-free punch cards, but today a host of sophisticated phone apps dispense rewards to eager shoppers—sometimes with a twist when marketers tinker with the reinforcement schedule. Indeed research shows that when a business "preloads" a frequent buyer card with a few punches this makes the reward look more attainable and motivates consumers to complete the rest. In a study on what the researchers term the **endowed progress effect**, a carwash gave one set of customers a



The FDIC gamified the process of learning about financial responsibility.
Source: FDIC.

buy-eight-get-one-free card, while a second set of customers got a 10-wash card that had been punched twice. Researchers reported that almost twice as many people in the second condition redeemed their cards even though in both cases customers had to pay for eight carwashes to get a free one. The connection to basic learning processes is clear. As one marketing professor explained, "All organisms, in different ways, are drawn to goals. The closer we are to achieving our goals, the more motivated we are to keep doing something. As mice on a runway get closer to a food pellet, they run faster . . .. as people get closer to having a completed card, the time between visits gets smaller."[29]

Many domains of human activity (and business) share the common need to motivate and reward people to achieve ascending levels of mastery. These include:

- **Store and brand loyalty.** Foursquare gives people virtual badges when they check in at a local cafe or restaurant. Some of them check in as often as they can to compete for the honor of being named "mayor" of the location.
- **Social marketing.** More than 75 utilities use a service from a company called Opower that awards badges to customers when they reduce their energy consumption. Customers can compare their progress with their neighbors' and broadcast their achievements on Facebook.
- **Employee performance.** Some restaurants enlist a service called Objective Logistics to rank the performances of waiters on a leaderboard, rewarding the good ones with plum shifts and more lucrative tables.[30]

OBJECTIVE 4-2
We learn about products by observing others' behavior.

Cognitive Learning Theory

Unlike behavioral theories of learning, **cognitive learning theory** approaches stress the importance of internal mental processes. This perspective views people as problem-solvers who actively use information from the world around them to master their environments. Supporters of this view also stress the role of creativity and insight during the learning process.

An Ocean Spray commercial for diet cranberry juice illustrates how marketers can harness their knowledge of cognitive theories to tweak marketing messages. The spot features two men, in the role of cranberry growers, who stand knee-deep in a bog. A group of women who are exercising joins them. Originally, the ad depicted the women having a party, but a cognitive scientist who worked on the campaign nixed that idea; she argued that the exercise class would send the diet message more quickly, whereas the party scene would confuse viewers who would spend too much time trying to figure out why the group was celebrating. This extra cognitive activity would distract from the ad's message. And, contrary to standard practice in advertising that the actors name the product as early as possible, she decided that the main characters should wait a few seconds before they mention the new diet product. She reasoned that viewers would need a second or so more time to process the images because of the additional action in the ad (the exercising). In a test of which ads got remembered best, this new version scored in the top 10 percent.[31]

Observational Learning

Observational learning occurs when we watch the actions of others and note the reinforcements they receive for their behaviors. In these situations, learning occurs as a result of *vicarious* rather than direct experience. This type of learning is a complex

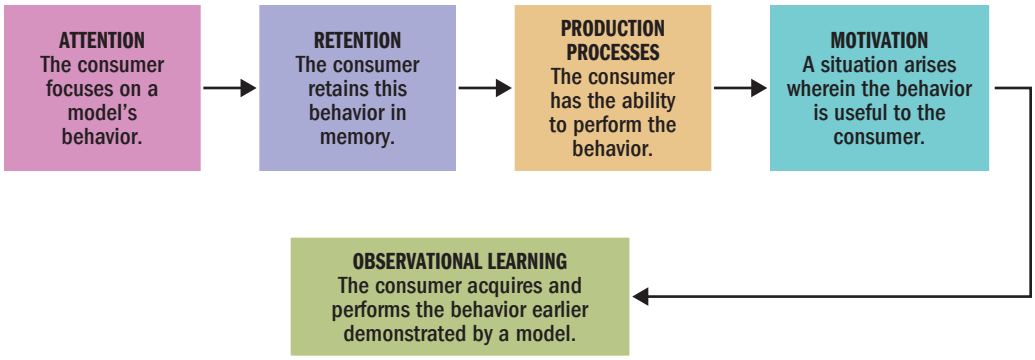


Figure 4.2 THE OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING PROCESS

process; people store these observations in memory as they accumulate knowledge and then they use this information at a later point to guide their own behavior. Particularly when we are preoccupied with other demands, we are likely to mimic others' behaviors as a **social default**.[32]

Modeling (not the runway kind) is the process of imitating the behavior of others. For example, a woman who shops for a new kind of perfume may remember the reactions her friend received when she wore a certain brand several months before, and she will mimic her friend's behavior in the hope that she will get the same feedback.

The modeling process is a powerful form of learning, and people's tendencies to imitate others' behaviors can have negative effects. Of particular concern is the potential of television shows and movies to teach violence to children. Children may be exposed to new methods of aggression by models (e.g., cartoon heroes) in the shows they watch. At some later point, when the child becomes angry, he or she may imitate these behaviors. A classic study demonstrates the effect of modeling on children's actions. Kids who watched an adult stomp on, knock down, and otherwise torture a large inflated "Bobo doll" repeated these behaviors when later left alone in a room with the doll; children who did not witness these acts did not.[33] Unfortunately, the relevance of this study to violent TV shows seems quite clear.

Figure 4.2 shows that for observational learning in the form of modeling to occur, the marketer must meet four conditions:[34]

1. The consumer's attention must be directed to the appropriate model, whom, for reasons of attractiveness, competence, status, or similarity, he or she must want to emulate.
2. The consumer must remember what the model says or does.
3. The consumer must convert this information into actions.
4. The consumer must be motivated to perform these actions.

Is Learning Conscious or Not?

A lot of controversy surrounds the issue of whether or when people are aware of their learning processes.[35] Whereas behavioral learning theorists emphasize the routine, automatic nature of conditioning, proponents of cognitive learning argue that even these simple effects are based on cognitive factors: They create expectations that a response will follow a stimulus (the formation of expectations requires mental activity). According to this school of thought, conditioning occurs because subjects develop conscious hypotheses and then act on them.

There is some evidence to support the existence of *nonconscious procedural knowledge*. People apparently do process at least some information in an automatic, passive way, a condition that researchers call "mindlessness" (we've all experienced that!).[36] When we meet someone new or encounter a new product, for example, we have a tendency to respond to the stimulus in terms of existing categories we have learned, rather than taking the trouble to formulate new ones. In these cases a *trigger feature*—some stimulus that cues us toward a particular pattern—activates a reaction. For example, men in one study rated a car in an ad as superior on a variety of characteristics if a seductive woman (the trigger feature) was present, despite the fact that the men did not believe the woman's presence actually had an influence on their evaluations.[37] We'll discuss these triggers in later chapters in the context of priming.

Nonetheless, many modern theorists regard some instances of automatic conditioning as cognitive processes, especially when people form expectations about the linkages between stimuli and responses. Indeed, studies using *masking effects*, which make it difficult for subjects to learn CS and UCS associations, show substantial reductions in conditioning.[38] An adolescent girl may observe that women on television and in real life seem to be rewarded with compliments and attention when they smell nice and wear alluring clothing. She figures out that the probability of these rewards occurring is greater when she wears perfume, so she deliberately wears a popular scent to obtain the reward of social acceptance. For now, the jury is out regarding the true impact of nonconscious processing and priming because this question currently is one of the hottest debates in the field of psychology.[39]

Marketing Applications of Cognitive Learning Principles

Our ability to learn vicariously when we observe the outcomes of what others do makes the lives of marketers much easier. They don't necessarily have to directly reward or punish consumers when they make a purchase (think how expensive or even ethically questionable that might be!). Instead, they can show what happens to desirable models who use or do not use their products; they know that consumers often will imitate these actions at a later time. For example, a perfume commercial might depict a throng of admirers who compliment a glamorous woman when she wears a certain fragrance. Needless to say, this learning process is more practical than providing the same attention to each woman who actually buys the perfume (unless your brand's market share is really, really small!).

Consumers' evaluations of the people they model go beyond simple stimulus–response connections. For example, a celebrity's image elicits more than a simple reflexive response of good or bad.[40] It is a complex combination of many attributes. In general, the degree to which a person emulates someone else depends on that model's level of *social attractiveness*. Attractiveness comes from several components, including physical appearance, expertise, or similarity to the evaluator (more on this in Chapter 8).

How Do We Learn to Be Consumers?

Ah, nothing like a luxurious spa day. But for a four-year-old girl? Sensing big opportunities, many adult spas are adding separate services for young girls that go well beyond the old-fashioned mommy/daughter manicure. The International Spa Association reports that 25 percent of its members now offer services specifically for the younger-than-13 age group. Chains such as Sweet and Sassy pamper their "princesses" with custom-size robes and banana-scented facials.[41]

We don't spring from the womb with consumer skills in place. **Consumer socialization** is the process "by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning in the marketplace."[42] Research supports the proposition that the brand preferences and product knowledge that occur in childhood persist into the later stages of consumers' lives.[43]

Where does this knowledge come from? Friends and teachers certainly participate in this process. For instance, children talk to one another about consumer products, and this tendency increases as kids age.[44] Especially for young children, though, the family and the media are two primary socialization sources.

Parents' Influence

Parents influence consumer socialization both directly and indirectly. They deliberately try to instill their own values about consumption in their children ("You're going to learn the value of a dollar!"). Parents also determine the degree to which their children come into contact with other information sources, such as television, salespeople, and peers.[45]

Other adults also serve as significant models for observational learning. Children learn about consumption as they watch their parents' behaviors and imitate them. Marketers encourage this process when they package adult products in child versions. This "passing down" of product preferences helps to create brand loyalty; researchers find evidence of intergenerational influence when they study the product choices of mothers and their daughters.[46]

The process of consumer socialization begins with infants; within the first two years, children request products they want. By about age five, most kids make purchases with the help of parents and grandparents, and by age eight most buy things on their own.[47] Figure 4.3 summarizes the sequence of stages as kids turn into consumers.



The beauty industry is expanding to cater to the needs of young consumers.
Source: Alikssa/Fotolia.

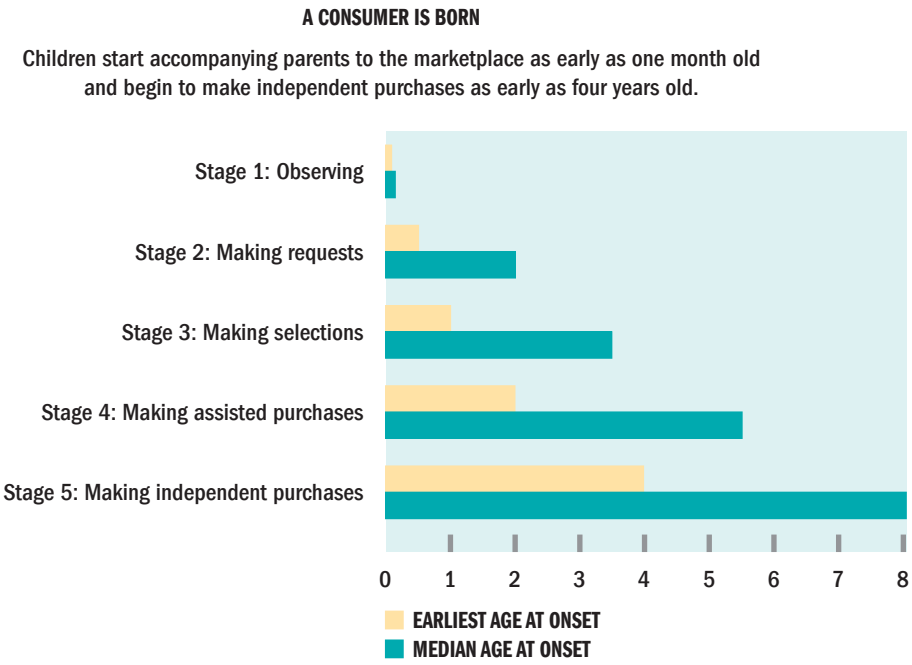


Figure 4.3 STAGES OF CONSUMER DEVELOPMENT

Parents exhibit different styles when they socialize their children:[48]

- *Authoritarian parents* are hostile, restrictive, and emotionally uninvolved. They do not have warm relationships with their children, they censor the types of media their children see, and they tend to have negative views about advertising.
- *Neglecting parents* also are detached from their children, and the parents don't exercise much control over what their children do.
- *Indulgent parents* communicate more with their children about consumption-related matters and are less restrictive. They believe that children should be allowed to learn about the marketplace without much interference.

Television and the Internet: Electronic Babysitters

Advertising starts to influence us at an early age. Today most kids divide their time among the TV set, the computer, and their cell phones. In the United States, about 80 percent of children age five and under use the internet at least once a week. What's more, like their older brothers and sisters, little kids are avid multitaskers: A Nielsen study reported that 36 percent of kids ages two to 11 watch online content and TV at the same time.[49]

As we've seen, many marketers push their products on kids to encourage them to build a lifelong habit. The National Institutes of Health projects that a ban on fast-food advertising to children would cut the national obesity rate by as much as 18 percent.[50] In two studies, British researchers compared the effects of television advertising on the eating habits of 152 kids between the ages of five and 11. The kids watched 10 ads followed by a cartoon. In one session, the kids saw ads for toys before they watched a video. In another session, the researchers replaced the toy ads with food ads that commonly run during children's programs. After both viewings, held two weeks apart, the kids were allowed to snack as much as they wanted from a table of low-fat and high-fat snacks, including grapes, cheese-flavored rice cakes, chocolate buttons, and potato chips. The five- to seven-year-old kids who saw the food ads ate 14 to 17 percent more calories than those who saw the toy ads. The results were even more dramatic among 9- to 11-year-olds. Those in the food ad condition ate from 84 to 134 percent more calories than did those in the toy ad condition.[51]

Cognitive Development

A child's ability to make mature, "adult" consumer decisions obviously increases with age (not that grown-ups always make mature decisions). Marketers segment kids in terms of their **stage of cognitive development**, or their ability to comprehend concepts of increasing complexity. Some evidence indicates that young children learn consumption-related information surprisingly well.[52]

The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget was the foremost proponent of the idea that children pass through distinct stages of cognitive development. He believed that a certain cognitive structure characterizes each stage as the child learns to process information.[53] In one classic demonstration of cognitive development, Piaget poured the contents of a short, squat glass of lemonade into a taller, thinner glass that actually held the same amount of liquid. Five-year-olds, who still believed that the shape of the glass determined its contents, thought this glass held more liquid than the first glass. They are in what Piaget termed a *preoperational stage of development*. In contrast, six-year-olds tended to be unsure, but seven-year-olds knew the amount of lemonade had not changed.

Many developmental specialists no longer believe that children necessarily pass through these fixed stages at the same time. An alternative view proposes that they differ in information-processing capability or the ability to store and retrieve information from memory. Researchers who advocate this approach identify three developmental stages:[54]

1. **Limited**—Children who are younger than age six do not employ storage-and-retrieval strategies.
2. **Cued**—Children between the ages of six and 12 employ these strategies but only when prompted to do so.
3. **Strategic**—Children 12 and older spontaneously employ storage-and-retrieval strategies.

This sequence of development underscores the notion that children do not think in the same way adults do, and we can't expect them to use information the same way either. It also reminds us that they do not necessarily form the same conclusions as do adults when they encounter product information. Kids are not as likely to realize that something they see on TV is not "real," and as a result they are more vulnerable to persuasive messages. Younger kids aren't able to distinguish media depictions from reality, so the more a child watches *Phineas and Ferb* or *SpongeBob SquarePants*, the more he or she will accept the images it depicts as real.[55] Kids also see idealized images of what it is like to be an adult. Because children older than age six do about a quarter of their television viewing during prime time, adult programs and commercials have a big effect on them. For example, young girls who see adult lipstick commercials associate lipstick with beauty.[56]

Research underscores the idea that children's understanding of brand names evolves as they age. Kids learn to relate to brand names at an early age; they recognize brand names in stores, develop preferences for some brands over others, and request branded items by name. However, brand names function as simple perceptual cues for these children that let them identify a familiar object with particular features. *Conceptual brand meanings*, which specify the nonobservable abstract features of the product, enter into the picture in middle childhood (about age eight); children incorporate them into their thinking and judgments a few years later. By the time a child reaches 12 years of age, he or she thinks about brands on a conceptual or symbolic level and he or she is likely to incorporate these meanings into brand-related judgments.[57]



Television advertising has a big impact on children's preferences.
Source: Thomas Koehler/photothek images UG/ Alamy Stock Photo.

Several business ventures illustrate that using sound principles of consumer psychology can also make good financial sense. The trend started a long time ago with public television's *Sesame Street*, but today the for-profit networks are in the game as well. The first successful foray into the preschool market was *Blue's Clues* in 1996, which turned into a huge hit as viewers abandoned the smarmy *Barney & Friends.*

Now, when millions of preschoolers tune in to Nickelodeon's hit show *Dora the Explorer*, they don't realize that they view content based on **multiple-intelligence theory**. This influential perspective argues for other types of intelligence, such as athletic prowess or musical ability, beyond the traditional math and verbal skills psychologists use to measure IQ. Thus, when Dora consults her map, she promotes "spatial" skills. And when she asks her young viewers to help her count planks to build a bridge, Dora builds "interpersonal intelligence."[58]

Message Comprehension

Because children differ in their abilities to process product-related information, advertisers' direct appeals to them raise many serious ethical issues.[59] Children's advocacy groups argue that kids younger than age seven do not understand the persuasive intent of commercials, and (as we've seen) younger children cannot readily distinguish between a commercial and programming. Kids' cognitive defenses are not yet sufficiently developed to filter out commercial appeals, so in a sense, altering their

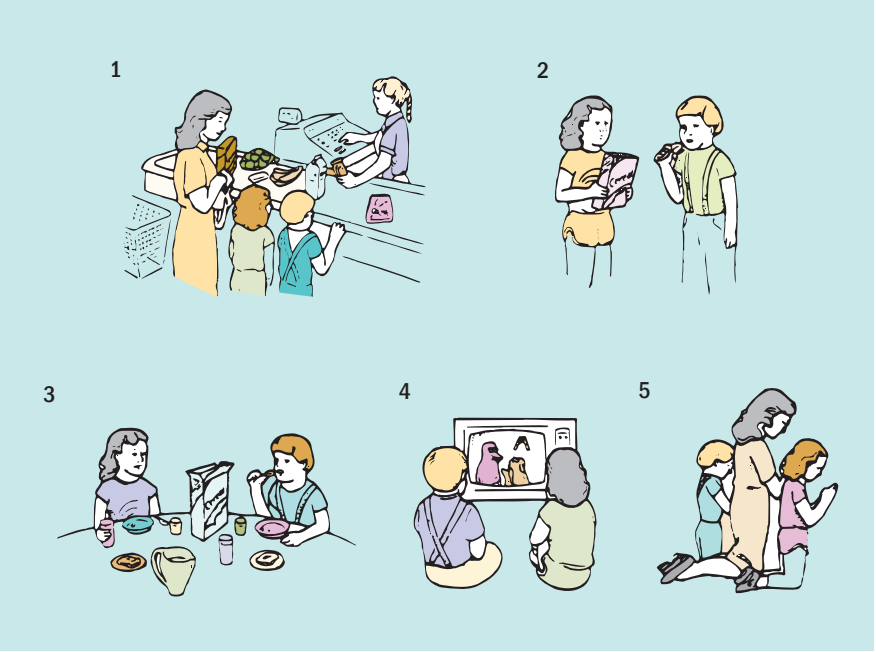


Figure 4.4 EXAMPLES OF SKETCHES RESEARCHERS USE TO MEASURE CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF COMMERCIAL INTENT

brand preferences may be likened to "shooting fish in a barrel," as one critic put it.[60] Figure 4.4 shows one attempt to assess whether kids can tell that a commercial is trying to persuade them.

Beginning in the 1970s, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) took action to protect children. The agency limited commercials during "children's" programming (most often Saturday morning television) and required "separators" to help children discern when a program ended and a commercial began (e.g., "We'll be right back after these commercial messages"). The FTC reversed itself in the early 1980s during the deregulatory, pro-business climate of Ronald Reagan's administration. The 1990 Children's Television Act restored some of these restrictions. Still, critics argue that rather than sheltering children from marketplace influences, the dominant way that marketers view them is as what one calls "kid customers."[61]

OBJECTIVE 4-3
Our brains process information about brands to retain them in memory.

Memory

Memory is a process of acquiring information and storing it over time so that it will be available when we need it. Contemporary approaches to the study of memory employ an *information-processing approach*. They assume that the mind is in some ways like a computer: Data are input, processed, and output for later use in revised form. Figure 4.5 summarizes the memory process:

1. In the **encoding stage**, information enters in a way the system will recognize.
2. In the **storage stage**, we integrate this knowledge with what is already in memory and "warehouse" it until it is needed.
3. During **retrieval stage**, we access the desired information.[62]

Many of our experiences are locked inside our heads, and they may surface years later if the right cues prompt them. Marketers rely on consumers to retain information they collect about products and services so they will apply it to future purchase

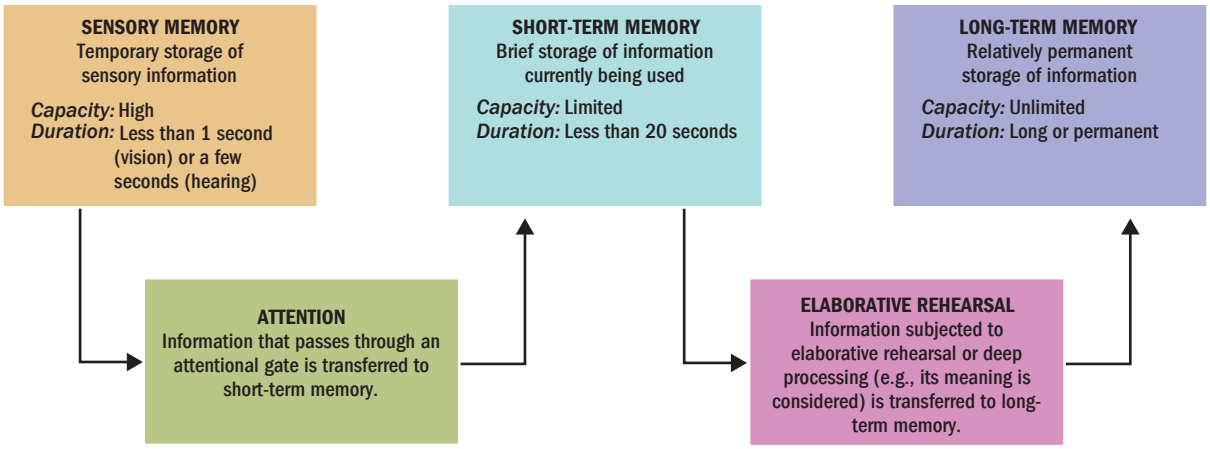


Figure 4.5 TYPES OF MEMORY

decisions. We combine this *internal memory* with *external memory* when we decide what to buy. This includes all the product details on packages and other marketing stimuli that permit us to identify and evaluate brand alternatives in the marketplace.[63]

The grocery-shopping list is a good example of a powerful external memory aid. When consumers use shopping lists, they buy approximately 80 percent of the items on the list. The likelihood that a shopper will purchase a particular list item is higher if the person who wrote the list also participates in the shopping trip. This means that if marketers can induce consumers to plan to purchase an item before they go shopping, there is a high probability that they will buy it. One way to encourage this kind of advance planning is to provide peel-off stickers on packages so that, when consumers notice the supply is low, they can simply peel off the label and place it directly on a shopping list.[64] Or, a retailer can support a phone app that generates a shopping list for the user (you already can choose from an abundance of apps that do this).[65]

How Our Brains Encode Information

The way we *encode*, or mentally program, information helps to determine how our brains will store this information. In general, it's more likely that we'll retain incoming data when we associate it with other things already in memory. For example, we tend to remember brand names that we link to physical characteristics of a product category (e.g., Coffee-Mate creamer or Sani-Flush toilet bowl cleaner) or that we can easily visualize (e.g., Tide detergent or Ford Mustang cars) compared to more abstract brand names.[66] Similarly, our brains automatically react to images of familiar celebrities and use them to guide how we think about them to ascribe meaning to other images of people or products with which they appear.[67]

Sometimes we process a stimulus simply in terms of its *sensory meaning*, such as the literal color or shape of a package. We may experience a feeling of familiarity when, for example, we see an ad for a new snack food we have recently tasted. In many cases, though, we encode meanings at a more abstract level. *Semantic meaning* refers to symbolic associations, such as the idea that rich people drink champagne or that fashionable women have navel piercings. Let's take a closer look at how we encode these deeper meanings.

Episodic memories relate to events that are personally relevant.[68] As a result, a person's motivation to retain these memories will likely be strong. Couples often have "their song," which reminds them of their first date or wedding. We call some especially vivid associations *flashbulb memories* (where were you when you first heard



Certain events create flashbulb memories. Do you remember when you heard that Osama bin Laden was dead?
Source: Cal Vornberger/Alamy Stock Photo.

that Osama bin Laden was dead?). In addition, recall of the past may affect future behavior. A college fund-raising campaign can raise more money when it evokes pleasant college memories than when it reminds alumni of unpleasant ones.

A **narrative**, or a description of a product that is written as a story, is often an effective way to convey product information. Our memories store a lot of the social information we acquire in story form; it's a good idea to construct ads in the form of a narrative so they resonate with the audience. Narratives persuade people to construct mental representations of the information they see or hear. Pictures aid in this construction and allow us to develop more detailed mental representations.[69] Research supports the idea that we are more likely to positively evaluate and purchase brands when they connect with us like this.[70]

Researchers describe three distinct memory systems: *sensory memory, short-term memory (STM)*, and *long-term memory (LTM)*. Each plays a role in processing brand-related information (see Figure 4.5).

Sensory Memory

Sensory memory stores the information we receive from our senses. This storage is temporary; it lasts a couple of seconds at most. For example, a man who walks past a donut shop gets a quick, enticing whiff of something baking inside. Although this sensation lasts only a few seconds, it is sufficient to allow him to consider whether he should investigate further. If he retains this information for further processing, it transfers to short-term memory.

Short-Term Memory

Short-term memory (STM) also stores information for a limited period of time, and it has limited capacity. Similar to a computer, this system is *working memory*; it holds the information we are currently processing. Our memories can store verbal input *acoustically* (in terms of how it sounds) or *semantically* (in terms of what it means).

We store this information as we combine small pieces into larger ones in a process we call **chunking**. A *chunk* is a configuration that is familiar to the person and that he

or she can think about as a unit. For example, a brand name like 7 For All Mankind is a chunk that represents a great deal of detailed information about the product.

Initially, researchers believed that our STM was capable of processing between five and nine chunks of information at a time; they described this basic property as "the magical number 7±2." This is the reason our phone numbers today (at least in the United States) originally had seven digits.[71] It now appears that three to four chunks is the optimal size for efficient retrieval (we remember seven-digit phone numbers because we chunk the individual digits, so we may remember a three-digit exchange as one piece of information).[72] Phone calls aside, chunking is important to marketers because it helps determine how consumers keep prices in short-term memory when they comparison-shop.[73]

It's common for marketers to give a brand a vivid name that conjures up an image or story in our minds. Research suggests that this strategy results in higher consumer evaluations versus brand names composed of meaningless letters or numbers. One study reported that consumers rated cell phones from Samsung and LG more positively after they were the first in the industry to break the practice of naming the phones with combinations of letters and numbers—LG's phones instead of sport names like Chocolate, Shine, Vu, Voyager, Dare, and Decoy, whereas Samsung started things off with the BlackJack, UpStage, FlipShot, and Juke, and later added the Access, Instinct, and Glyde. During the same period these companies increased market share in this category. Compared to other phone brands, consumers rated these models as modern, creative, engaging, original, cool and easy to remember.[74]

Long-Term Memory

Long-term memory (LTM) is the system that allows us to retain information for a long period of time. A cognitive process of **elaborative rehearsal** allows information to move from STM into LTM. This involves thinking about the meaning of a stimulus and relating it to other information already in memory. Marketers assist in the process when they devise catchy slogans or jingles that consumers repeat on their own.

How Our Memories Store Information

The relationship between STM and LTM is a source of some controversy. The traditional *multiple-store* perspective assumes that STM and LTM are separate systems. More recent research has moved away from the distinction between the two types of memory; it emphasizes the interdependence of the systems. According to **activation models of memory**, depending on the nature of the processing task different levels of processing occur that activate some aspects of memory rather than others.[75] The more effort it takes to process information (so-called *deep processing*), the more likely it is that information will transfer into LTM.

Associative Networks

According to activation models of memory, an incoming piece of information gets stored in an **associative network** that contains many bits of related information. We each have organized systems of concepts that relate to brands, manufacturers, and stores stored in our memories; the contents, of course, depend on our own unique experiences.

Think of these storage units, or *knowledge structures*, as complex spider webs filled with pieces of data. Incoming information gets put into nodes that connect to one another (if you haven't guessed, this is also why we called cyberspace the World Wide Web). When we view separate pieces of information as similar for some reason, we chunk them together under some more abstract category. Then, we interpret new,

The Tangled Web

The internet is making our memory worse. Some psychologists describe this phenomenon as the **Google Effect**; the tendency for people to rely too heavily on the ability to readily access content online and, as a result, be less likely to remember certain details. One study found that a third of adults turn to Google with a query without first trying to remember the answer. Similarly, some researchers are concerned that with over a billion people relying on navigation apps such as Google Maps, our sense of direction is being destroyed because the apps diminish our natural ability to create maps in our minds.[1]

incoming information to be consistent with the structure we have created.[76] This helps explain why we are better able to remember brands or stores that we believe "go together"; for example, when Titleist golf balls rather than Chanel fragrances sponsors a golf tournament.[77]

Certainly, social networks such as Facebook have revolutionized how people store and share memories. However, at least some users are starting to feel that maybe these platforms do this a bit too well: They don't necessarily want others (especially employers, parents, and other authority figures) to know about all of their "awesome" experiences. A big factor behind Snapchat's popularity is that the platform posts and then destroys more than 60 million photos or messages every day. One of Snapchat's founders explained the thinking behind the app: "It became clear how awful social media is. "There is real value in sharing moments that don't live forever."[78]

In the associative network, links form between nodes. For example, a consumer might have a network for "perfumes." Each node represents a concept related to the category. This node can be an attribute, a specific brand, a celebrity the consumer identifies with a specific perfume brand, or even a related product. A network for perfumes might include concepts such as the brand names Viva La Juicy by Juicy Couture, Calvin Klein Eternity, and Elizabeth Arden Red Door, as well as attributes such as sexy and elegant.

When we ask the consumer to list perfumes, this consumer recalls only those brands that show up in the appropriate category. The task of a new entrant that wants to position itself as a category member (e.g., a new luxury perfume) is to provide cues that facilitate its placement in the appropriate category. Figure 4.6 shows a sample network for perfumes.

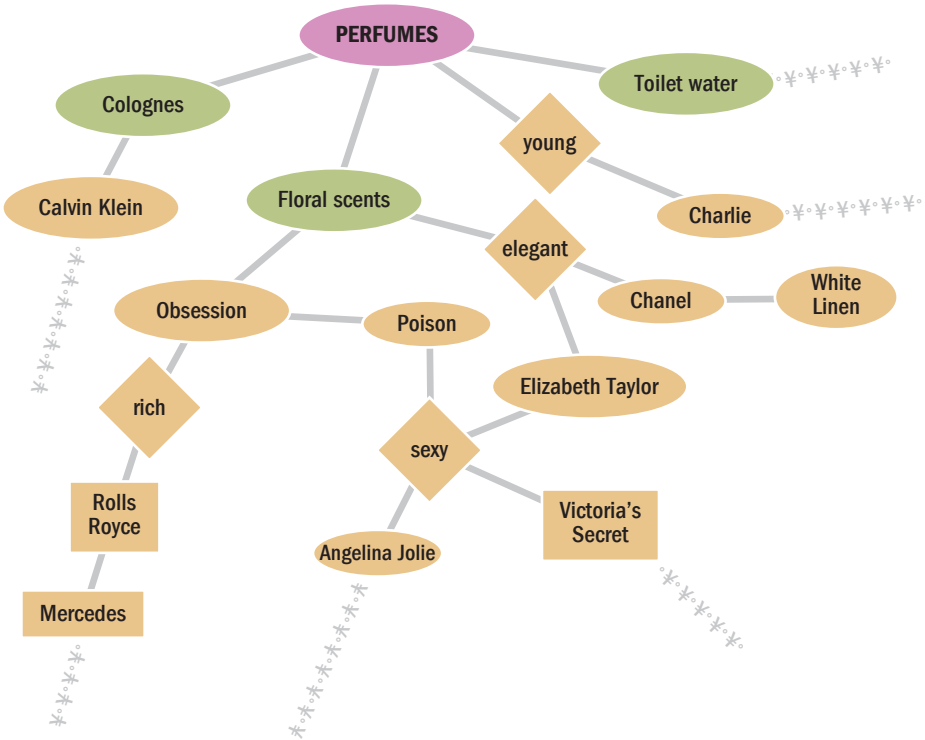


Figure 4.6 AN ASSOCIATIVE NETWORK FOR PERFUMES

Spreading Activation

A marketing message may activate our memory of a brand directly (for example, when it shows us a picture of the package), or it may do so indirectly when it links to something else that's related to the brand in our knowledge structure. If it activates a node, it will also activate other linked nodes, much as tapping a spider's web in one spot sends movement reverberating across the web. Meaning thus spreads across the network, and we recall concepts, such as competing brands and relevant attributes, that we use to form attitudes toward the brand.

This process of **spreading activation** allows us to shift back and forth among levels of meaning. The way we store a piece of information in memory depends on the type of meaning we initially assign to it. This meaning type, in turn, will determine how and when something activates the meaning. Thus, we could store the memory trace for an Axe men's fragrance ad in one or more of the following ways:

- **Brand-specific**—Memory is stored in terms of claims the brand makes ("it's macho").
- **Ad-specific**—Memory is stored in terms of the medium or content of the ad itself (a macho-looking guy uses the product).
- **Brand identification**—Memory is stored in terms of the brand name (e.g., "Axe").
- **Product category**—Memory is stored in terms of how the product works or where it should be used (a bottle of Axe sits in a guy's medicine cabinet).
- **Evaluative reactions**—Memory is stored as positive or negative emotions ("that looks cool").[79]

Levels of Knowledge

Within a knowledge structure, we code elements at different levels of abstraction and complexity. *Meaning* concepts (such as "macho") get stored as individual nodes. We may combine these concepts into a larger unit we call a *proposition* (or a *belief*). A proposition links two nodes together to form a more complex meaning, which can serve as a single chunk of information. For example, "Axe is cologne for macho men" is a proposition (though not necessarily a correct one!).

In turn, we integrate propositions to produce an even more complex unit called a *schema*. As we saw in Chapter 3, a schema is a cognitive framework we develop through experience. We encode information more readily when that information is consistent with an existing schema.[80] The ability to move up and down among levels of abstraction greatly increases processing flexibility and efficiency. For this reason, young children who do not yet have well-developed schemas are not able to make as efficient use of purchase information as are older children.[81]

One type of schema especially relevant to consumer behavior is a **script**; a sequence of events an individual expects to occur. As consumers we learn **service scripts** that guide our behavior in commercial settings. We expect a certain sequence of events, and we may become uncomfortable if the service departs from our script. A service script for a visit to the dentist might include such events as (1) drive to the dentist, (2) read old magazines in the waiting room, (3) hear name called and sit in dentist's chair, (4) dentist injects something into gums, (5) dentist turns on high-pitched drill, and so on. This desire to follow a script helps to explain why such service innovations as automatic bank machines, self-service gas stations, or "scan-your-own" grocery checkouts have met with resistance by some consumers who have trouble adapting to new sequences of events.[82]

How We Retrieve Memories When We Decide What to Buy

It hasn't been smooth sailing for the cruise industry lately, following several highly publicized incidents where things were not exactly ship-shape on board. One of the most embarrassing and high-profile accidents stranded several thousand guests on a Carnival ship in the Gulf of Mexico with no electricity or working toilets, but plenty of smartphones to record the dismal conditions. Carnival's potential cruisers are skittish, so the cruise line launched a $25 million public relations offensive to lure people back on board. The campaign asks previous customers to use social media to post images and videos of happy experiences that will contribute to Carnival's "Moments that Matter" commercial. The ad's voiceover says, "We never forget the moments that matter. We hang them on our walls. We share them with everyone. And hold onto them forever. Since the day we first set sail, millions of lasting moments have been made with us. What will yours be?" Sure enough, the campaign received more than 30,000 submissions, presumably from passengers who enjoyed both the midnight chocolate buffet *and* plumbing that worked.[85]

We've seen that *retrieval* is the process whereby we recover information from long-term memory. As evidenced by the popularity of the board game *Trivial Pursuit* or the TV show *Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?,* we have a vast quantity of information stored in our heads—a lot of which is not useful unless you play the game! Although most of the information that enters LTM does not go away, it may be difficult or impossible to retrieve unless the appropriate cues are present. What factors influence the likelihood that we will remember the marketing messages that organizations work so hard to create?



Individual cognitive or physiological factors are responsible for some of the differences in retrieval ability among people.[83] Older adults consistently display inferior recall ability for current items, such as prescription drug instructions, although they may recall with great clarity events that happened to them when they were younger.[84] The popularity of puzzles, such as Sudoku and Brain Box, and centers that offer "mental gymnastics," attests to emerging evidence that we can keep our retrieval abilities sharp by exercising our minds, just as we keep our other muscles toned when we work out on a regular basis.
Source: Eddison Books Ltd.

Situational factors also influence retrieval; these relate to the environment in which we encounter the message. Not surprisingly, recall is enhanced when we pay more attention to the message in the first place. Some evidence indicates that we can more easily retrieve information about a **pioneer brand** (the first brand to enter a market) from memory than we can for **follower brands** that ride their coattails because the first product's introduction is likely to be distinctive, and for the time being, no competitors divert our attention.[86] In addition, we are more likely to recall descriptive brand names than those that do not provide adequate cues as to what the product is.[87]

Not surprisingly, the way a marketer presents the message influences the likelihood that we'll be able to recall it later. The **spacing effect** describes the tendency for us to recall printed material more effectively when the advertiser repeats the target item periodically, rather than presenting it repeatedly in a short time period.[88] The viewing environment of a marketing message also affects recall. For example, commercials we see during baseball games yield the lowest recall scores among sports programs because the activity is stop-and-go rather than continuous. Unlike football or basketball, the pacing of baseball gives many opportunities for attention to wander even during play. General Electric discovered that its commercials fared better in television shows with continuous activity, such as stories or dramas, compared to variety shows or talk shows that are punctuated by a series of acts.[89] A large-scale analysis of TV commercials found that viewers recall commercials shown first in a series of ads better than those they see last.[90]

Finally, it goes without saying that the nature of the ad itself plays a big role in determining whether it's memorable. One study on print advertising reported that we are far more likely to remember spectacular magazine ads, including multipage spreads, three-dimensional pop-ups, scented ads, and ads with audio components. For example, a Pepsi Jazz two-page spread, which incorporated a three-dimensional pop-up of the opened bottle, a small audio chip that played jazz music from the bottle's opening, and a scratch-and-sniff tab that let readers smell its black cherry vanilla flavor, scored an amazing 100 percent in reader recall.[91] Unfortunately, that kind of multimedia treatment is expensive; not every ad can mimic a Broadway production!

What Makes Us Forget?

Marketers obviously hope that consumers will not forget about their products. However, in a poll of more than 13,000 adults, more than half were unable to remember any specific ad they had seen, heard, or read in the past 30 days. How many can you remember right now? Clearly, forgetting by consumers is a big headache for marketers (not to mention a problem for students when they study for exams!). In one major study, only 23 percent of the respondents could recall a new product introduced in the past year.[92]

Early memory theorists assumed that memories simply fade with the passage of time. In a process of **decay**, the structural changes that learning produces in the brain simply go away. Forgetting also occurs as a result of **interference**; as we learn additional information, it displaces the previous information. Consumers may forget stimulus–response associations if they subsequently learn new responses to the same or similar stimuli; we call this process *retroactive interference*. Or prior learning can interfere with new learning, a process we term *proactive interference*. Because we store pieces of information in memory as nodes that link to one another, we are more likely to retrieve a meaning concept that is connected by a larger number of links.

But as we learn new responses, a stimulus loses its effectiveness in retrieving the old response.[93]

These interference effects help to explain problems in remembering brand information. Consumers tend to organize attribute information by brand.[94] Additional attribute information regarding a brand or similar brands may limit the person's ability to recall old brand information. Recall may also be inhibited if the brand name is composed of frequently used words. These words cue competing associations; as a result, we retain less brand information.[95] In one study, brand evaluations deteriorated more rapidly when ads for the brand appeared with messages for 12 other brands in the same category than when researchers showed the ad along with ads for 12 dissimilar products.[96] Thus, when we increase the uniqueness of one brand, it impairs the recall of other brands.[97] However, when we call a competitor by name, this can result in poorer recall for our own brand.[98]

State-Dependent Retrieval

Is it true that you'll do better on an exam if you study for it in the classroom in which you'll take the test? Perhaps. The phenomenon of **state-dependent retrieval** illustrates that we are better able to access information if our internal state is the same at the time of recall as when we learned the information. So, we are more likely to recall an ad if our mood or level of arousal at the time of exposure is similar to that in the purchase environment. When marketers re-create the cues that were present when they first presented the information, they can enhance recall. For example, on its box Life cereal uses a picture of "Mikey" from its long-running TV commercials, which facilitates recall of brand claims and favorable brand evaluations.[99]

Familiarity and Recall

As a general rule, when we are already familiar with an item we're more likely to recall messages about it. Indeed, this is one of the basic goals of marketers who try to create and maintain awareness of their products. The more experience a consumer has with a product, the better use he or she makes of product information.[100]

However, there is a possible fly in the ointment: As we noted previously in this text, some evidence indicates that extreme familiarity can result in inferior learning and recall. When consumers are highly familiar with a brand or an advertisement, they may not pay much attention to a message for it because they do not believe that any additional effort will increase their knowledge.[101] We call this process *automaticity*.[102] For example, when researchers expose consumers to a radio ad that repeats the audio track from a television ad they've already seen, they do little critical, evaluative processing; they just mentally replay the video portion of the ad.[103]

We may also encounter a **highlighting effect** that occurs when the order in which consumers learn about brands determines the strength of association between these brands and their attributes. Consumers more strongly associate common attributes with early-learned brands and unique attributes with late-learned brands. More generally, we are more likely to recognize words, objects, and faces we learn early in life than similar items we learn later. This applies to brands as well; managers who introduce new entries into a market with well-established brand names need to work harder to create learning and memory linkages by exposing consumers to information about them more frequently.[104]

Salience and Recall

The **salience** of a brand refers to its prominence or level of activation in memory. Stimuli that stand out in contrast to their environments are more likely to command

attention, which, in turn, increases the likelihood that we will recall them. The **von Restorff Effect** is well-known to memory researchers; it shows that almost any technique that increases the novelty of a stimulus also improves recall. This explains why unusual advertising or distinctive packaging tends to facilitate brand recall.[105]

The tactic of introducing a surprise element in an ad can boost recall, even if the new information is not relevant to the remaining material.[106] In addition, *mystery ads*, in which the ad doesn't identify the brand until the end, are more effective if we want to build associations in memory between the product category and that brand—especially in the case of relatively unknown brands.[107]

Furthermore, the *intensity* and type of emotions we experience at the time also affect the way we recall the event later. We recall **mixed emotions** (e.g., those with positive and negative components) differently from **unipolar emotions** that are either wholly positive or wholly negative. The latter become even more polarized over time, so that we recall good things as even better than they really were and bad things as even worse (maybe the "good old days" weren't really so good after all!).[108]

The Viewing Context

Regardless of how awesome a commercial is, the show in which it appears influences its impact. Nielsen (one company that measures who watches which media) reports that viewers who enjoy a program are more likely to respond positively to a commercial and to say they want to buy the advertised product. Nielsen studied the responses of 10,000 people across 50 shows and 200 brands. Viewers are almost one-third more likely to remember brands whose products were placed in shows they enjoy. The impact of this factor varies across show format; it's weaker in sitcoms but much stronger in "lifestyle programs" such as *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.[109]

It also helps when the marketer's message is consistent with the theme or events in the program, and it's even better when the advertised product actually makes a reference to the show. The Discovery Channel documented this effect during a broadcast of its program *Mythbusters*, which uses science to test the validity of urban legends. The network ran a brief ad for Guinness beer in which a character asked another whether it was a "myth that Guinness only has 125 calories." Viewers who saw this ad remembered the name of the Guinness brand 41 percent more often than they did when they saw a traditional ad for the beer. Other similar **hybrid ads** that include a program tie-in deliver similar results.[110]

Pictorial Versus Verbal Cues

Is a picture worth a thousand words? There is some evidence for the superiority of visual memory over verbal memory, but this advantage is unclear because it is more difficult to measure recall of pictures.[111] However, the available data indicate that we are more likely to recognize information we see in picture form at a later time.[112] In one recent study, participants who could freely take photographs during an experience recognized more of what they saw and less of what they heard, compared with those who could not take any photographs.[113]

Certainly, visual aspects of an ad are more likely to grab a consumer's attention. In fact, eye-movement studies indicate that about 90 percent of viewers look at the dominant picture in an ad before they bother to view the copy.[114]

Although pictorial ads may enhance recall, they do not necessarily improve comprehension. One study found that television news items presented with illustrations (still pictures) as a backdrop result in improved recall for details of the news story, even though understanding of the story's content does not improve.[115] Another



Visual aspects of an ad grab a consumer's attention, especially when they are novel. That is certainly the case for this "pile of trash" that is actually an outdoor ad on a Dutch street for the MINI Cooper.
Source: Courtesy of JWT Amsterdam.

study confirmed that consumers typically recall ads with visual figures more often and they like them better.[116]

How We Measure Consumers' Recall of Marketing Messages

Because marketers pay so much money to place their messages in front of consumers, they hope that people will actually remember these ads later. It seems that they have good reason to be concerned. In one early study, fewer than 40 percent of television viewers made positive links between commercial messages and the corresponding products; only 65 percent noticed the brand name in a commercial, and only 38 percent recognized a connection to an important point.[117] To make matters worse, recall seems to be even weaker for digital ads. One recent study reported that while online media offer a much less expensive way to reach consumers, people recall a maximum of about 30 percent of what they see. In contrast, they recall 60 percent of television messages.[118]

Recognition versus Recall

One indicator of good advertising is, of course, the impression it makes on us. But how can we define and measure this impact? Two basic measures of impact are **recognition** and **recall**. In the typical *recognition test*, researchers show ads to subjects one at a



Facebook's Timeline feature helps consumers to recall the brands they have "liked" over time.
Source: Justin Sullivan/Getty Images.

time and ask if they have seen them before. In contrast, *free recall tests* ask consumers to independently think of what they have seen without being prompted for this information first; obviously, this task requires greater effort on their part.

Under some conditions, these two memory measures tend to yield the same results, especially when the researchers try to keep the viewers' interest in the ads constant (although that may be an overly artificial way to study true memory for ads).[119] Generally, though, recognition scores tend to be more reliable and do not decay over time the way recall scores do.[120] Recognition scores are almost always better than recall scores because recognition is a simpler process and the consumer has more retrieval cues available.

Both types of retrieval play important roles in purchase decisions, however. Recall tends to be more important in situations in which consumers do not have product data at their disposal, so they must rely on memory to generate this information.[121] Recognition is more likely to be an important factor in a store, where retailers confront consumers with thousands of product options (i.e., external memory is abundantly available), and the task simply may be to recognize a familiar package. Unfortunately, package recognition and familiarity can have negative consequences; for example, consumers may ignore warning labels because they take those messages for granted and don't really notice them.[122]

Problems with Memory Measures

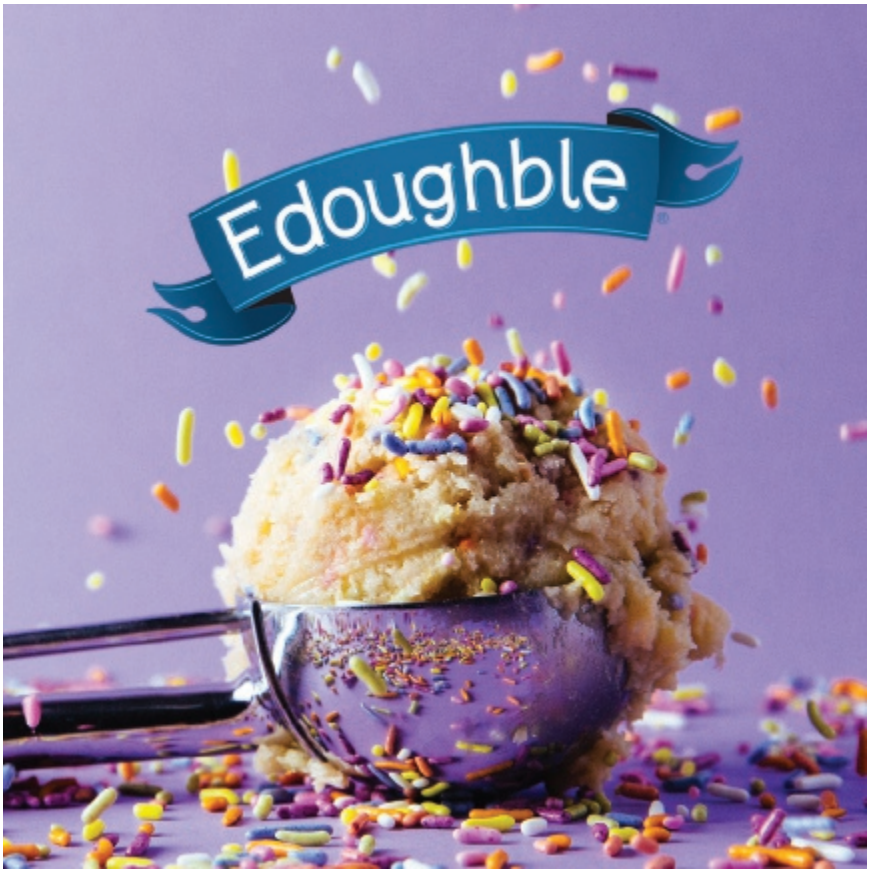
Although measuring an ad's memorability is important, analysts have questioned whether existing measures accurately assess these dimensions, for several reasons. First, the results we obtain from a measuring instrument are not necessarily based on what we measure, but rather on something else about the instrument or the respondent. This form of contamination is a **response bias**. For example, people tend to give "yes" responses to questions, regardless of what the item asks. In addition, experimental subjects often are eager to be "good subjects": They try to figure out what the experimenter is looking for and give the response they think they are supposed to give. This tendency is so strong that in some studies the rate at which subjects claim they recognize *bogus ads* (ads they have not seen before) is almost as high as their recognition rate for those they really have seen![123]

Memory Lapses

People are also prone to forget information or retain inaccurate memories (yes, even younger people). Typical problems include *omitting* (leaving facts out), *averaging* (the tendency to "normalize" memories by not reporting extreme cases), and *telescoping* (inaccurate recall of time).[124] These distortions are not just a problem in court cases that rely on eyewitness testimony; they also call into question the accuracy of product usage databases that rely on consumers to recall their purchase and consumption of food and household items. For example, one study asked people to describe what portion of various foods—small, medium, or large—they ate in a typical meal. However, the researchers used different definitions of "medium." Regardless of the definition they gave, about the same number of people claimed they typically ate "medium" portions.[125] In other situations, we may "fool ourselves" by distorting past memories. For example, some people who work toward a goal like losing weight or saving money may exaggerate (to themselves) how much progress they've made to justify current indulgences. That tendency points to the importance of documenting your progress (your Fitbit monitoring device doesn't lie) to keep yourself on track.[126]

Bittersweet Memories: The Marketing Power of Nostalgia

Marketers love to bring back treasured items from our past. Currently demand for denim clothing is booming, as companies like Frame and Lee reissue designs from the 1990s. So is a love of edible cookie dough as starts up like Edoughble, Dō, and Unbaked offer consumers the opportunity to be transported back to their childhood when they ate raw cookie batter from mom's mixing bowl. Coca-Cola revived Surge, a



Edible cookie dough takes us back to a childhood delight.
Source: Courtesy Edoughble, LLC. Photograph by Audrey Ma.

citrus-flavored soda that it discontinued more than a decade ago. The brand is coming back after a millennial fan base called "The Surge Movement" spent years lobbying for it to return. The Surge Movement's Facebook page has more than 150,000 likes.

Nostalgia describes the bittersweet emotion that arises when we view the past with both sadness and longing.[127] References to "the good old days" are increasingly common, as advertisers call up memories of youth and hope that these feelings will translate to what they're selling today. A **retro brand** is an updated version of a brand from a prior historical period. These products trigger nostalgia, and researchers find that they often inspire consumers to think back to an era when (at least in our memories) life was more stable, simple, or even utopian. Simply, they let us "look backward through rose-colored glasses." One study reported that people who were asked to think about the past were willing to pay more for products than those who were asked to think about new or future memories.[128]

Our prior experiences also help to determine what we like today. Consumer researchers created a *nostalgia index* that measures the critical ages during which our preferences are likely to form and endure over time. It turns out that a good predictor of whether people will like a specific song is how old they were when that song was popular. On average, we are most likely to favor songs that were popular when we were 23.5 years old (so pay attention to the hot songs if you haven't turned 23 yet). Our preferences for fashion models peak at age 33, and we tend to like movie stars who were popular when we were 26 or 27 years old.[129]



Fossil's product designs evoke memories of earlier, classic styles.
Source: Reprinted with permission from Fossil Group, Inc. Photography by Thom Jackson and Jon Kirk.

Products are particularly important as memory markers when our sense of the past is threatened, as, for example, when an event such as divorce, relocation, or graduation challenges a consumer's current identity.[130] Our cherished possessions often have *mnemonic* qualities that serve as a form of external memory when they prompt us to retrieve episodic memories. For example, family photography allows consumers to create their own retrieval cues; the 11 billion amateur photos we take annually form a kind of external memory bank for our culture. A stimulus is, at times, able to evoke a weakened response even years after we first perceived it. We call this effect **spontaneous recovery**, and this reestablished connection may explain consumers' powerful emotional reactions to songs or pictures they have not been exposed to in quite a long time. Some recent nostalgia campaigns include:

Marketers often resurrect popular characters and stories from days gone by; they hope that consumers' fond memories will motivate them to revisit the past. We had a 1950s' revival in the 1970s, and consumers in the 1980s got a heavy dose of memories from the 1960s. Today, it seems that popular characters only need to be gone for a few years before someone tries to bring them back. Many companies have responded as they dig deep into their vaults to bring back old favorites. Planters Peanuts recruited the actor Robert Downey, Jr., as the new voice of Mr. Peanut. "Retired" brand names, including Meister Brau beer, the brokerage firm Shearson, Handi-Wrap plastic wrap, and Wonder Bread were sold at auction to companies that want to bring them back to life.[131] The biggest retro success story in recent years: the Old Spice Guy campaign that went viral and revived a men's deodorant brand that is more than 70 years old.

Sometimes the pent-up demand for these favorites from days past can cause a promotion to backfire when too many people want them. That's what McDonald's discovered recently when it brought back its Szechuan" sauce for a day. The condiment was created as part of a 1998 promotion for the Disney film *Mulan* and was a hit among consumers who were kids at the time. Hordes of them congregated at Mickey D's around the country, only to discover that the limited supplies ran out quickly.

One Twitter user posted a video of an angry crowd chanting "We want sauce." Some disappointed fans searched online sites like eBay where the condiment was selling for exorbitant sums. An offer for three sealed packs of the sauce sold for $848.88 ($282.96 each), while a single packet was bidding for $995. Be careful what you wish for![132]

MyLab Marketing

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Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. **Conditioning results in learning.**

   Behavioral learning theories assume that learning occurs as a result of responses to external events. Classical conditioning occurs when a stimulus that naturally elicits a response (an unconditioned stimulus) is paired with another stimulus that does not initially elicit this response. Over time, the second stimulus (the conditioned stimulus) elicits the response even in the absence of the first.

2. **We learn about products by observing others' behavior.**

   Cognitive learning occurs as the result of mental processes. For example, observational learning occurs when the consumer performs a behavior as a result of seeing someone else performing it and being rewarded for it.

3. Our brains process information about brands to retain them in memory.

Memory is the storage of learned information. The way we encode information when we perceive it determines how we will store it in memory. The memory systems we call *sensory memory*, *short-term memory*, and *long-term memory* each play a role in retaining and processing information from the outside world in marketing strategies.

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REVIEW

4-1 What is the difference between an unconditioned stimulus and a conditioned stimulus?
4-2 Give an example of a halo effect in marketing.
4-3 How can marketers use repetition to increase the likelihood that consumers will learn about their brand?
4-4 Why is it not necessarily a good idea to advertise a product in a commercial where a really popular song plays in the background?
4-5 What is the difference between classical conditioning and instrumental conditioning?
4-6 What is the major difference between behavioral and cognitive theories of learning?
4-7 Name the three stages of information processing as we commit information about products to memory.
4-8 What is *external memory*, and why is it important to marketers?
4-9 Give an example of an episodic memory.
4-10 Why do U.S. phone numbers have seven digits?
4-11 List the three types of memory, and explain how they work together.
4-12 How is associative memory like a spider web?
4-13 How does the likelihood that a person wants to use an ATM machine relate to a schema?
4-14 Why does a pioneering brand have a memory advantage over follower brands?
4-15 If a consumer is familiar with a product, advertising for it can work by either enhancing or diminishing recall. Why?

4-16 Define *nostalgia*, and explain why it's such a widely used advertising strategy.

4-17 Name the two basic measures of memory and describe how they differ from one another.

4-18 List three problems with measures of memory for advertising.

4-19 How do different types of reinforcement enhance learning? How does the strategy of frequency marketing relate to conditioning?

4-20 How does learning new information make it more likely that we'll forget things we've already learned?

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

4-21 To hasten kids' introduction to social media, a team of Finnish designers invented a block-sorting toy that also works like Twitter. It allows preverbal kids to grab colorful blocks with icons for sleeping, eating, or brushing their teeth; the kids then fit them into slots to indicate what they're up to. The device then transmits the "status update" to light up the corresponding block-shape on the same toy in another household.[133] Should very young children be introduced to social media this way?

4-22 In his book, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, author Malcolm Gladwell argues that hallowed marketing research techniques such as focus groups aren't effective because we usually react to products quickly and without much conscious thought; thus, it's better simply to solicit consumers' first impressions rather than getting them to think at length about why they buy. What's your position on this issue?

4-23 Even food can facilitate recall: One study looked at how favorite recipes stimulate memories of the past. When the researchers asked informants to list three of their favorite recipes and to talk about these choices, they found that people tended to link them with memories of past events, such as childhood memories, family holidays, milestone events (such as dishes they only make on special holidays, like corned beef and cabbage on St. Patrick's Day), heirlooms (recipes handed down across generations), and the passing of time (e.g., only eating blueberry cobbler in the summer).[134] Indeed, one of the most famous literary references is from the classic (3,000-page!) novel *Remembrance of Things Past* by Marcel Proust. The narrator dips a pastry (a "madeleine") into his tea, and this action unleashes a flood of memories that drive the rest of the book. How might marketers try to tie these powerful food-related memories to branding strategies?

4-24 Some die-hard fans were not pleased when the Rolling Stones sold the tune "Start Me Up" for about $4 million to Microsoft, which wanted the classic song to promote its Windows '95 launch. The Beach Boys sold "Good Vibrations" to Cadbury Schweppes for its Sunkist soft drink, Steppenwolf offered "Born to Be Wild" to plug the Mercury Cougar, and even Bob Dylan sold "The Times They Are A-Changin'" to Coopers & Lybrand (now called PriceWaterhouse-Coopers).[135] Other rock legends have refused to play the commercial game, including Bruce Springsteen, the Grateful Dead, Led Zeppelin, Fleetwood Mac, R.E.M., and U2. According to U2's manager, "Rock'n roll is the last vestige of independence. It is undignified to put that creative effort and hard work to the disposal of a soft drink or beer or car."[136] Singer Neil Young is especially adamant about not selling out; in his song "This Note's for You," he croons, "Ain't singing for Pepsi, ain't singing for Coke, I don't sing for nobody, makes me look like a joke." What's your take on this issue? How do you react when one of your favorite songs turns up in a commercial? Is this use of nostalgia an effective way to market a product? Why or why not?

4-25 The chapter discusses the possibility that our increasing reliance on apps to search for information is diminishing our natural abilities to think for ourselves. Do you agree?

▶ APPLY

4-26 Devise a product jingle memory test. Compile a list of brands that are or have been associated with memorable jingles, such as Chiquita Banana, Alka-Seltzer, McDonald's, or even webuyanycar.com. Read this list to friends, and see how many jingles they remember. You may be surprised at their level of recall.

4-27 A physician borrowed a page from product marketers when she asked for their advice to help persuade people in the developing world to wash their hands habitually with soap. Diseases and disorders caused by dirty hands—like diarrhea—kill a child somewhere in the world about every 15 seconds, and about half those deaths could be prevented with the regular use of soap. The project adapted techniques that major marketers use to encourage habitual product usage of items such as skin moisturizers, disinfecting wipes, air fresheners, water purifiers, toothpaste, and vitamins. For example, beer commercials often depict a group of guys together, because research shows that being with a group of friends tends to trigger habitual drinking! The researchers found that when people in Ghana experienced a feeling of disgust, this was a cue to wash their hands. However, as in many developing countries, toilets are actually a symbol of cleanliness because they have replaced pit latrines. So, an advertising campaign included messages that reminded people of the germs they could still pick up even in modern bathrooms: mothers and children walked out of restrooms with a glowing purple pigment on their hands that contaminated everything they touched. These images in turn triggered the habit of handwashing, and the project resulted in a significant increase in the number of consumers who washed their hands with soap.[137] How can other organizations that work to improve public health, the environment, or other social issues harness our knowledge about consumer learning and habitual behavior to create or reenergize positive habits?

4-28 Collect some pictures of "classic" products that have high nostalgia value. Show these pictures to others, and allow them to free-associate. Analyze the types of memories that these products evoke, and think about how a marketer might employ these associations in a product's promotional strategy.

CASE STUDY Gap Takes Customers Back in Time—to the Nineties!

Clothing company Gap wants you to remember the good old days—all the way back to the 1990s. In an effort to increase flagging sales for their iconic clothing line, the company is employing a powerful technique to engage with their customers and to bring them back into their iconic stores: nostalgia.

Gap began in 1969 when Donald and Doris Fisher were desperate to find a pair of jeans that actually fit.[138] Their first retail store in San Francisco sold only Levi's jeans and LP records, perhaps foretelling the role that music would play in the chain's promotions. Over the years, Gap evolved to sell more upscale clothing and in the 1990s, their line hit its peak with a mix of basics like preppy oxford shirts, turtlenecks, khaki pants, and logo-emblazoned sportswear.[139] This success led to the spinoffs Gap Kids and Baby Gap along with two vertical extensions: The higher-priced Banana Republic and Old Navy, a value brand.[140] But beginning in the 2000s, the original Gap brand began to lose market share among the over-30 crowd and also struggled to appeal to a younger audience.[141]

Fast forward to today and Gap wants to, well, *rewind* to a happier time for their customers and Gap sales. The 1990s was a formative period for many in the coveted millennial generation, those born roughly between 1979 and 1994. To bring this and other generations back into their stores, Gap recently launched the '90s Archive Re-Issue collection. This features iconic styles from that decade, including Reverse Fit and Easy Fit Denim, the Pocket Tee, Pleated Khakis, and the Bodysuit. To launch the line, Gap created a film called *Generation Gap*, with references to songs like "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," "Just Can't Get Enough," and "Mellow Yellow." Cast members singing and dancing include Rumer Willis, Lizzy Jagger, and Evan Ross, the children of pop stars who appeared in the Gap campaigns of the 1990s.[142]

Will a dance back down memory lane improve Gap sales? As you learned in this chapter, many brand managers and advertisers certainly think so. Adidas brought back Stan Smith tennis shoes and Kia featured Aerosmith star Steven Tyler in its recent Super Bowl ad.[143,144] McDonald's has even revived the Hamburglar![145] These and Gap's recent effort are examples of *nostalgia marketing*, where marketers try to dig into our memories, find positive feelings about a past period and associate it with their brand. In the case of Gap and other brands with a long history, consumers may have memories about the products themselves, the advertising they saw, or the music that was either in the ads or that was popular during the era. Aaron Harvey of ad agency Ready Set Rocket says nostalgia shows the brand's longevity and also ". . . creates a story where the brand can be the hero."[146]

Psychologists believe there is something deeper going on as well. Because nostalgia involves a combination of both happiness and sadness, it can inspire us to live fuller lives by bringing into focus people and experiences that were important to us in the past. This can be especially important during times of transition as when young adults move out on their own. This experience, that many millennials are now facing, can drive us back to cherished memories and thus make us feel happier.[147]

So, why the 1990s? In addition to Britney Spears, NSync, and the Backstreet Boys, the decade had a lot going for it.[148] The economy was strong, with $1.7 million jobs added annually from 1992 to 1999 and 4 percent unemployment by the end of the decade. Household income grew by 10 percent during the 1990s and stocks quadrupled in value. A federal budget surplus, the fall of the Soviet empire, and a decline in the murder rate by 41 percent all contributed to a strong sense of well-being. Technology flourished during the period with both the internet and cell phones coming into widespread use. Starbucks began to serve us coffee, starting with fewer than 100 stores in 1990 and ending with almost 2500 by the year 2000. The era also brought a host of TV shows and movies many now regard as classics, along with one of the most successful literary creations in modern history, the Harry Potter novels.[149]

Although most "Gap kids" were probably not focused on these statistics, the numbers contributed to a general feeling of goodness during that period, a feeling that may still be lodged in millennial memories. A study by the Pew Research Center found that 57 percent of Americans look back positively to the 1990s.[150] Those positive feelings are likely one reason that Gap recently launched a new version of the Archive Reissue program. This one, called "Archive Reissue – Logo Remix," expands the nostalgic trip to additional decades. Another video is part of the campaign, this time with current popular singers and actors joining together for group dances including "The Wobble," "Cha Cha," and "Kid-n-Play."[151]

Gap is a much larger retail conglomerate today with almost 3600 stores across five different retail brands.[152] While its Old Navy brand is the most successful of the portfolio, the Gap brand has significant brand equity that the company plans to exploit through nostalgic campaigns like these.[153] It will be up to Gap customers to decide if remembering the '90s brings back happy memories that also send them back into Gap stores.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 4-1 Choose a favorite brand that does not currently use nostalgia in their marketing. How could they incorporate this technique into either their product strategy or their advertising?

CS 4-2 How has social media enabled nostalgia marketing?

CS 4-3 Does nostalgia marketing only work with consumers who have memories of the era focused on in the advertising? How might others who are younger be attracted as well?

CS 4-4 We know that many people have strong personal connections with certain songs that were popular decades ago. Is it possible they will resent companies that "hijack" these tunes to sell products? Can nostalgia campaigns ever boomerang?

MyLab Marketing

If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

4-29 New passive monitoring systems allow us to pay tolls automatically or simply show our phones equipped with systems like Apple Pay. Convenient, for sure. But these systems also eliminate the transparency of the connection between the stimulus and the response. As a result we don't think as much about the costs when we use them. Is this a problem for consumers?

4-30 The Snapchat app provides a way for social media users to share content that disappears after a brief time with their friends. In Europe, Google is fighting an intense legal battle over what some call the "right to be forgotten"; users want the option to dictate to Google whether it will be allowed to display results when people search about them. On the other hand, some people who believe that "information wants to be free" say that if a person posts online it should be with the expectation that the content will be permanent and that you forfeit control over others' right to access it. Which argument is correct?

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5

Motivation and Affect

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why:

5-1 Products can satisfy a range of consumer needs.

5-2 Consumers experience a range of affective responses to products and marketing messages.

5-3 The way we evaluate and choose a product depends on our degree of involvement with the product, the marketing message, or the purchase situation.

As Basil scans the menu at the trendy health-food restaurant Paula has dragged him to, he reflects on what a man will give up for love. Now that Paula has become a die-hard vegan, she's slowly but surely working on him to forsake those juicy steaks and burgers for healthier fare. He can't even hide from tofu and other delights at school; the dining facility in his dorm just started to offer "veggie" alternatives to its usual assortment of greasy "mystery meats" and other delicacies he loves.

Paula is totally into it; she claims that eating this way not only cuts out unhealthy fat but also is good for the environment. Just his luck to fall head-over-heels for a "tree-hugger." As Basil gamely tries to decide between the stuffed artichokes with red pepper vinaigrette and the grilled, marinated zucchini, fantasies of a sizzling 14-ounce T-bone dance before his eyes.



Source: Phil Date/Shutterstock.

OBJECTIVE 5-1
Products can satisfy a range of consumer needs.

The Motivation Process: Why Ask Why?

Paula certainly is not alone in her belief that eating green is good for the body, the soul, and the planet. According to a 2017 study, 6 percent of Americans identify as vegan. Indeed the number of vegans in the United States has doubled since 2009.[1]

Vegetarianism refers only to a diet that excludes meat (some animal products that do not involve the death of an animal, such as milk, cheese, and butter, may be included). *Veganism,* in contrast, links to a set of ethical beliefs about use of and cruelty to animals. In addition to objecting to hunting or fishing, adherents protest cruel animal training; object to the degrading use of animals in circuses, zoos, rodeos, and races; and oppose the testing of drugs and cosmetics on animals.

The forces that drive people to buy and use products are generally straightforward—for example, when a person chooses what to have for lunch. As hard-core vegans demonstrate, however, even the basic food products we consume also relate to wide-ranging

beliefs regarding what we think is appropriate or desirable. In some cases, these emotional responses create a deep commitment to the product. Sometimes people are not even fully aware of the forces that drive them toward some products and away from others.

To understand motivation is to understand *why* consumers do what they do. Why do some people choose to bungee-jump off a bridge or compete on reality shows, whereas others spend their leisure time playing chess or gardening? Whether it is to quench a thirst, kill boredom, or attain some deep spiritual experience, we do everything for a reason, even if we can't articulate that reason. We teach marketing students from Day 1 that the goal of marketing is to satisfy consumers' needs. However, this insight is useless unless we can discover what those needs are and why they exist. A beer commercial once asked, "Why ask why?" In this chapter, we'll find out.

Motivation refers to the processes that lead people to behave as they do. It occurs when a need that the consumer wishes to satisfy is aroused. The need creates a state of tension that drives the consumer to attempt to reduce or eliminate it. This need may be *utilitarian* (i.e., a desire to achieve some functional or practical benefit, as when a person loads up on green vegetables for nutritional reasons) or it may be *hedonic* (i.e., an experiential need, involving emotional responses or fantasies as when a person feels "righteous" by eating kale). The desired end state is the consumer's **goal**. Marketers try to create products and services to provide the desired benefits and help the consumer to reduce this tension.

One question that keeps some consumer researchers up at night is whether a person even needs to be aware of a motivation to achieve a goal. The evidence suggests that motives can lurk beneath the surface, and cues in the environment can activate a goal even when we don't know it: Marketers are just beginning to explore the effects of **incidental brand exposure**:

- People in a room who were exposed to a sign of the brand name "Apple" provided responses on an unrelated task that were more unique compared to those who saw a sign with the IBM brand name.[2]
- College students who used a "cute" ice cream scoop to help themselves to ice cream took a larger amount than those who used a plain scoop; the researchers explained that the whimsical object drove them to be more self-indulgent even though they weren't aware of this effect.[3]
- Some students scored higher on difficult Graduate Records Examination questions when they took the test using a Massachusetts Institute of Technology pen and delivered a better athletic performance when they drank water from a Gatorade cup during strenuous exercise.[4]

Motivational Strength

Whether the need is utilitarian or hedonic, the magnitude of the tension it creates determines the urgency the consumer feels to reduce it. We call this degree of arousal a **drive**.

Drive Theory

Drive theory focuses on biological needs that produce unpleasant states of arousal (e.g., your stomach grumbles during a morning class). The arousal this tension causes motivates us to reduce it and return to a balanced state called **homeostasis**. Some researchers believe that this need to reduce arousal is a basic mechanism that governs much of our behavior. Indeed there is research evidence for the effectiveness of so-called **retail therapy**; apparently the act of shopping restores a sense of personal control over one's environment and as a result can alleviate feelings of sadness.[5] Go for it!

If a behavior reduces the drive, we naturally tend to repeat it. Your motivation to leave class early to grab a snack would be greater if you hadn't eaten in 24 hours than if you had eaten only two hours earlier. If you did sneak out and got indigestion afterward, say, from wolfing down a package of Twinkies, you would be less likely to repeat this behavior the next time you want a snack. Your degree of motivation, then, depends on the distance between your present state and the goal.

Drive theory runs into difficulties when it tries to explain some facets of human behavior that run counter to its predictions. People often do things that increase a drive state rather than decrease it. For example, we may *delay gratification*. If you know you are going out for a lavish dinner, you might decide to forego a snack earlier in the day even though you are hungry at that time.

Expectancy Theory

Most current explanations of motivation focus on cognitive factors rather than biological ones to understand what motivates behavior. **Expectancy theory** suggests that expectations of achieving desirable outcomes—positive incentives—rather than being pushed from within motivate our behavior. We choose one product over another because we expect this choice to have more positive consequences for us. Thus, we use the term *drive* here loosely to refer to both physical and cognitive processes.

The **placebo effect** vividly demonstrates the role that expectations play on our feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. This term refers to the well-documented tendency for your brain to convince you that a fake treatment is the real thing—and thus a sugar pill or other placebo can actually reduce pain, treat insomnia, and provide other benefits.[6]

A recent study looked at the increase in sexual assaults and car accidents caused by people who drink alcohol mixed with energy drinks. Although this mixture doesn't actually increase the physiological effects of intoxication, many people believe that it does. When the researchers labeled a cocktail made of vodka, Red Bull, and fruit juice to emphasize that it contained an energy drink, study participants (males between 18 and 25) perceived themselves to be more intoxicated than did those who drank the same cocktail without this labeling. The effect was more pronounced among those who *believe* energy drinks increase intoxication. Although the actual levels of intoxication did not differ (as measured by a Breathalyzer), participants who believed that intoxication increases risk-taking were more likely to score high on a measure of risk-taking. In addition, those who believed that alcohol intoxication increases sexual disinhibition scored higher on a measure of sexual self-confidence—predictions about whether a woman would "accept their advances."[7]

Motivational Direction

Motives have direction as well as strength. They are goal-oriented in that they drive us to satisfy a specific need. We can reach most goals by a number of routes, and the objective of a company is to convince consumers that the alternative it offers provides the best chance to attain the goal. For example, a consumer who decides that she needs a pair of jeans to help her reach her goal of being admired by others can choose among Levi's, Secret Circus, True Religion, Escada, 7 for All Mankind, and many other alternatives, each of which promises to deliver certain benefits.

Needs versus Wants

As we saw in Chapter 1, a *need* reflects a basic goal such as keeping yourself nourished or protected from the elements. In contrast a *want* is a specific pathway to achieving this objective that depends a lot on our unique personalities, cultural upbringing, and

our observations about how others we know satisfy the same need. One person's cool downtown loft is another's suburban McMansion. In some cases, we don't even know we have a "want" until we can no longer have it: A lot of people didn't know they wanted *foie gras* ice cream sandwiches until California made them illegal. California banned *foie gras* in 2012, arguing that it was cruel to force-feed a duck to fatten its liver. Demand for delicacies made with the expensive and unobtainable dish spiked. A federal court overturned the ban in 2015, much to the relief of fatty liver connoisseurs.[8]

When we focus on a *utilitarian need,* we emphasize the objective, tangible attributes of products, such as miles per gallon in a car; the amount of fat, calories, and protein in a cheeseburger; or the durability of a pair of blue jeans. *Hedonic needs* are subjective and experiential; here we might look to a product to meet our needs for excitement, self-confidence, or fantasy—perhaps to escape the mundane or routine aspects of life.[9] Many items satisfy our hedonic needs (there's even a popular resort called Hedonism). Luxury brands in particular thrive when they offer the promise of pleasure to the user—how badly do you "need" that Armani suit or Coach bag?[10]

It's hard to overstate the importance of **hedonic consumption** as an influence on consumers' choices. This term refers to the multisensory, fantasy, and emotional aspects of consumers' interactions with products.[11] As manufacturing costs go down and the amount of "stuff" that people accumulate goes up, consumers want to buy things that will provide hedonic value in addition to simply doing what they're designed to do. A *Dilbert* comic strip poked fun at this trend when it featured a product designer who declared: "Quality is yesterday's news. Today we focus on the emotional impact of the product." Fun aside, the new focus on emotional experience is consistent with psychological research finding that people prefer additional *experiences* to additional *possessions* as their incomes rise.[12]

In this environment, form *is* function. Two young entrepreneurs named Adam Lowry and Eric Ryan discovered that basic truth when they quit their day jobs to develop a line of house-cleaning products they called Method. Cleaning products—what a yawn, right?

Think again: For years, companies such as Procter & Gamble have plodded along, peddling boring boxes of soap powder to generations of housewives who suffered in silence, scrubbing and buffing, yearning for the daily respite of martini time. Lowry and Ryan gambled that they could offer an alternative: cleaners in exotic scents such as cucumber, lavender, and ylang-ylang that came in aesthetically pleasing bottles. The bet



A want (like fast food) is a specific way to satisfy a need (like hunger).
Source: Dennis Tarnay, Jr./Alamy Stock Photo.



For some, jumping out of an airplane is a valuable hedonic experience.
Source: iurii/Shutterstock.

paid off. Within two years, the partners were cleaning up, taking in more than $2 million in revenue. Shortly thereafter, they hit it big when Target contracted to sell Method products in its stores.[13]

There's a method to Target's madness. Design is no longer the province of upper-crust sophisticates who never got close enough to a cleaning product to be revolted by it. The store chain helped to make designers such as Karim Rashid, Michael Graves, Philippe Starck, Todd Oldham, and Isaac Mizrahi household names. In fact, recent research evidence suggests that our brains are wired to appreciate good design: Respondents who were hooked up to a brain apparatus called a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanner showed faster reaction times when they saw aesthetically pleasing packages even compared to well-known brands such as Coca-Cola.[14] Mass-market consumers thirst for great design, and they reward those companies that give it to them with their enthusiastic patronage and loyalty. From razor blades such as the Gillette Sensor to the Apple Watch and even to the lowly trashcan, design *is* substance. Form *is* function.

Motivational Conflicts

Consumers experience different kinds of motivational conflicts that can impact their purchase decisions. For example we might be conflicted if we're torn between buying something that serves a useful purpose versus something that's just "for fun" (kind of like getting a package of tube socks versus a Vans snapback hat for your birthday). Indeed a recent study found that promotions such as price discounts, rebates, coupons, and loyalty rewards exert a bigger impact on hedonic versus utilitarian purchases. Apparently it's more difficult to justify an hedonic purchase, so these promotions provide a way to reduce the guilt that comes from buying them ("hey, it was on sale!").[15]

A goal has *valence*, which means that it can be positive or negative. We direct our behavior toward goals we value positively; we are motivated to *approach* the goal and to seek out products that will help us to reach it. However, as we saw in Chapter 4's discussion of negative reinforcement, sometimes we're also motivated to *avoid* a negative outcome rather than achieve a positive outcome. We structure purchases or consumption activities to reduce the chances that we will experience a nasty result. For example, many consumers work hard to avoid rejection by their peers (an avoidance goal). They stay away from products that they associate with social disapproval. Products such as deodorants and mouthwash frequently rely on consumers' negative motivation when ads depict the onerous social consequences of underarm odor or bad breath.

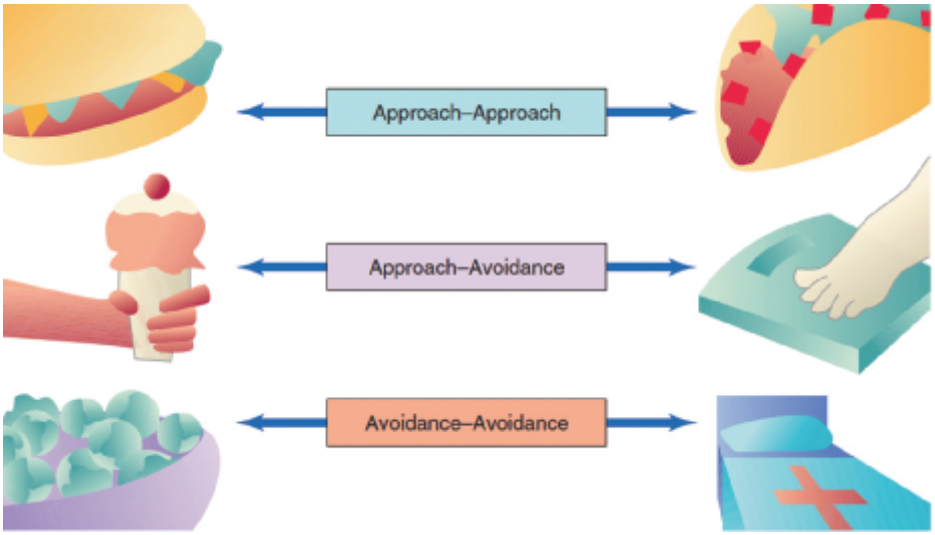


Figure 5.1 TYPES OF MOTIVATIONAL CONFLICT

Because a purchase decision can involve more than one source of motivation, consumers often find themselves in situations in which different motives, both positive and negative, conflict with one another.[16] Marketers attempt to satisfy consumers' needs by providing possible solutions to these dilemmas. As Figure 5.1 shows, there are three general types of conflicts we should understand.

Approach–Approach Conflict

A person has an **approach–approach conflict** when he or she must choose between two desirable alternatives. A student might be torn between going home for the holidays and going on a skiing trip with friends. Or, he or she might have to choose between going to listen to two bands that are playing at different clubs on the opposite sides of town. The **theory of cognitive dissonance** is based on the premise that people have a need for order and consistency in their lives and that a state of *dissonance* (tension) exists when beliefs or behaviors conflict with one another. We resolve the conflict that arises when we choose between two alternatives through a process of *cognitive dissonance reduction*, where we look for a way to reduce this inconsistency (or dissonance) and thus eliminate unpleasant tension.

Postdecision dissonance occurs when a consumer must choose between two products, both of which possess good and bad qualities. When he or she chooses one product and not the other, the person gets the bad qualities of the product he or she buys and loses out on the good qualities of the one he or she didn't buy. This loss creates an unpleasant, dissonant state that he or she wants to reduce. We tend to convince ourselves, after the fact, that the choice we made was the smart one as we find additional reasons to support the alternative we did choose—perhaps when we discover flaws with the option we did not choose (sometimes we call this *rationalization*). A marketer can bundle several benefits together to resolve an approach–approach conflict. For example, Miller Lite's claim that it is "less filling" *and* "tastes great" allows the drinker to "have his beer and drink it too."

Approach-Avoidance Conflict

Many of the products and services we desire have negative consequences attached to them as well as positive ones. We may feel guilty or ostentatious when we buy a luxury product such as a fur coat or we might feel like gluttons when we crave a tempting

package of Twinkies. An **approach–avoidance conflict** occurs when we desire a goal but wish to avoid it at the same time.

Some solutions to these conflicts include the proliferation of fake furs, which eliminate guilt about harming animals to make a fashion statement, and the success of diet programs such as Weight Watchers that promise good food without the calories.[17] Many marketers try to help consumers overcome guilt by convincing them that they deserve these luxuries. As the model for L'Oréal cosmetics proclaims, "Because I'm worth it!"

Avoidance-Avoidance Conflict

Sometimes we find ourselves caught "between a rock and a hard place." We may face a choice with two undesirable alternatives: for instance, the option of either spending more money on an old car or buying a new one. Don't you hate when that happens? Marketers frequently address an **avoidance–avoidance conflict** with messages that stress the unforeseen benefits of choosing one option (e.g., when they emphasize special credit plans to ease the pain of car payments).

How We Classify Consumer Needs

Numerous psychologists have tried to define a universal inventory of needs they could trace systematically to explain virtually all behavior.

Murray's Psychogenic Needs

One such inventory that the psychologist Henry Murray developed delineates a set of 20 *psychogenic needs* that (sometimes in combination) result in specific behaviors. These needs include such dimensions as *autonomy* (being independent), *defendance* (defending the self against criticism), and even *play* (engaging in pleasurable activities).[18]

Murray's framework is the basis for a number of personality tests that modern-day psychologists use, such as the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). In the TAT, the analyst shows test subjects four to six ambiguous pictures and asks them to write answers to four direct questions about the pictures:

1. What is happening?
2. What led up to this situation?
3. What is being thought?
4. What will happen?

The theory behind the test is that people will freely project their own subconscious needs onto the neutral stimulus. By getting responses to the pictures, the analyst really gets at the person's true needs for achievement or affiliation or whatever other need may be dominant. Murray believed that everyone has the same basic set of needs but that individuals differ in their priority rankings of these needs.[19]

Specific Needs and Buying Behavior

Other motivational approaches have focused on specific needs and their ramifications for behavior. For example, individuals with a high *need for achievement* strongly value personal accomplishment.[20] They place a premium on products and services that signify success because these consumption items provide feedback about the realization of their goals. These consumers are good prospects for products that provide evidence of their achievement. One study of working women found that those who were high in achievement motivation were more likely to choose clothing they considered businesslike and

less likely to be interested in apparel that accentuated their femininity.[21] Some other important needs that are relevant to consumer behavior include:

- *Need for affiliation* (to be in the company of other people):[22] The need for affiliation is relevant to products and services for people in groups, such as participating in team sports, frequenting bars, and hanging out at shopping malls.
- *Need for power* (to control one's environment):[23] Many products and services allow us to feel that we have mastery over our surroundings. These products range from "hopped-up" muscle cars and drivers bumping to the throbbing bass on their car radios as they cruise down the road to luxury resorts that promise to respond to every whim of their pampered guests.
- *Need for uniqueness* (to assert one's individual identity):[24] Products satisfy the need for uniqueness when they pledge to bring out our distinctive qualities. For example, Cachet perfume claims to be "as individual as you are."

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The psychologist Abraham Maslow originally developed his influential **Hierarchy of Needs** to understand personal growth and how people attain spiritual "peak experiences." Marketers later adapted his work to understand consumer motivations.[25] Maslow's *hierarchical* structure implies that the order of development is fixed—that is, we must attain a certain level before we activate a need for the next, higher one. Marketers embraced this perspective because it (indirectly) specifies certain types of product benefits people might look for, depending on their stage of mental or spiritual development or on their economic situation.[26]

Figure 5.2 presents this model. At each level, the person seeks different kinds of product benefits. Ideally, an individual progresses up the hierarchy until his or her dominant motivation is a focus on "ultimate" goals, such as justice and beauty. Unfortunately, this state is difficult to achieve (at least on a regular basis); most of us have to be satisfied with occasional glimpses, or *peak experiences*.

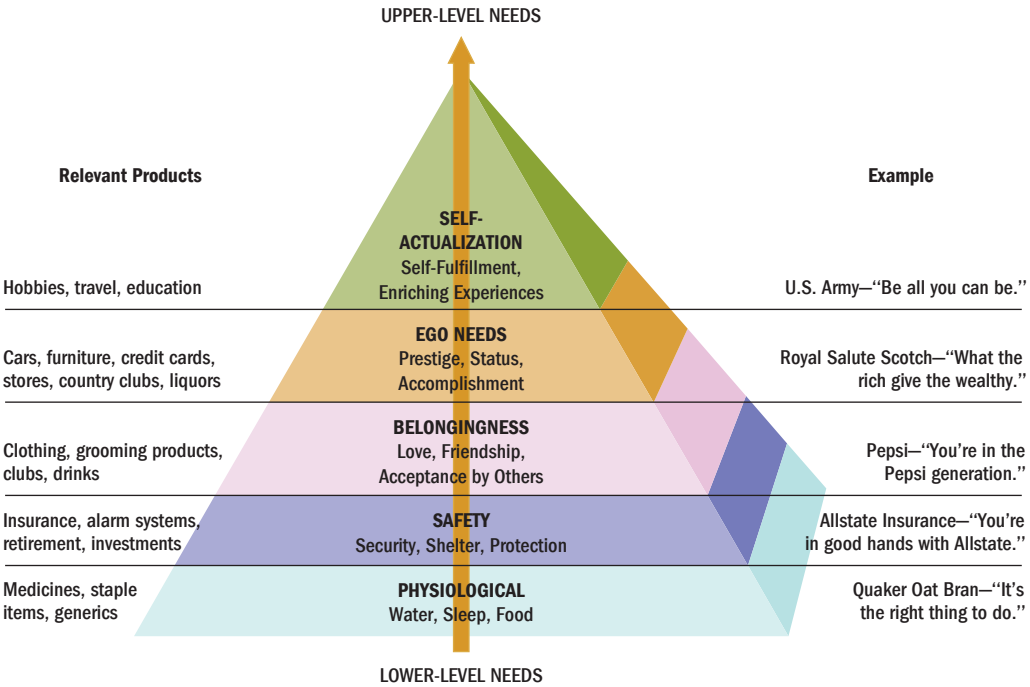


Figure 5-2 MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



Safety is a lower-level need in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.
Source: Courtesy of Volvo do Brasil.

Marketers' applications of this hierarchy have been somewhat simplistic, especially because the same product or activity can gratify different needs. For example, one early study found that gardening could satisfy needs at every level of the hierarchy:[27]

- **Physiological**—"I eat what I grow."
- **Safety**—"I feel safe in the garden."
- **Social**—"I can share my produce with others."
- **Esteem**—"I can create something of beauty."
- **Self-actualization**—"My garden gives me a sense of peace."

Another problem with taking Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs too literally is that it is culture-bound; its assumptions may apply only to Western culture. People in other cultures (or, for that matter, even some in Western cultures) may question the order of the levels it specifies. A religious person who has taken a vow of celibacy



A basic activity like gardening can satisfy people at different levels depending upon their motivation to engage in it.
Source: Todd Arena/123RF.

would not necessarily agree that physiological needs must be satisfied before self-fulfillment can occur.

Similarly, many Asian cultures value the welfare of the group (belongingness needs) more highly than needs of the individual (esteem needs). The point is that this hierarchy, although marketers widely apply it, is helpful primarily because it reminds us that consumers may have different need priorities in different consumption situations and at different stages in their lives—not because it *exactly* specifies a consumer's progression up the ladder of needs.

OBJECTIVE 5-2 Consumers experience a range of affective responses to products and marketing messages.

Affect

Zumba began in the 1990s as a Colombian dance-fitness program; today it's an international sensation. Every week about 15 million people in more than 180 countries take classes that combine elements of dance moves adapted from various sources such as hip-hop, salsa, merengue, mambo, belly dancing, and Bollywood, with some squats and lunges thrown in for good measure. The Zumba company started as an infomercial producer, but the regimen was popularized when the CEO's brother, an out-of-work advertising executive, had a revelation and convinced him to change focus. The brother recalls that he saw a movie billboard with some exuberant dancers: "Immediately, I called my brother and said, 'You're selling the wrong thing. You're selling fitness when you should be selling this emotion.' I wanted to turn Zumba into a brand where people felt that kind of free and electrifying joy." The two invented the tagline, "Ditch the workout; join the party!" The rest is history.[28]

We may not all be in good enough shape to endure a Zumba workout, but many of our decisions are driven by our emotional responses to products. Social scientists refer to these raw reactions as **affect**. That explains why so many marketing activities and messages focus on altering our moods or linking their products to an affective response, although different types of emotional arousal may be more effective in some contexts than others.[29] These connections make sense to anyone who has ever teared up during a sappy TV commercial or written an angry letter after getting shabby treatment at a hotel.

Types of Affective Responses

Affect describes the experience of emotionally laden states, but the nature of these experiences ranges from evaluations, to moods, to full-blown emotions. **Evaluations** are valenced (i.e., positive or negative) reactions to events and objects that are not accompanied by high levels of physiological arousal. For example, when a consumer evaluates a movie as being positive or negative, this usually involves some degree of affect accompanied by low levels of arousal (possible exceptions such as *Fifty Shades of Gray* notwithstanding!). **Moods** involve temporary positive or negative affective states accompanied by moderate levels of arousal. Moods tend to be diffuse and not necessarily linked to a particular event (e.g., you might have just "woken up on the wrong side of the bed this morning"). **Emotions** such as happiness, anger, and fear tend to be more intense and often relate to a specific triggering event such as receiving an awesome gift.[30]

Marketers find many uses for affective states. They often try to link a product or service with a positive mood or emotion (just think of a sentimental Hallmark



Zumba exercise routines focus on providing an emotional experience. *Source:* Danny Martindale/WireImage/ Getty Images.

greeting card). Of course a variety of products from alcohol to chocolate are consumed at least partly for their ability to enhance mood. Numerous companies evaluate the emotional impact of their ads; some such as Unilever and Coca-Cola use sophisticated technology that interprets how viewers react to ads by their facial expressions.[31] An emotion tracking platform called Realeyes teamed up with a tour operator to uncover people's subconscious responses to videos of different landscapes to identify their perfect holiday.[32]

On other occasions marketing communications may deliberately evoke negative affect, such as regret if you forget to play the lottery. Perhaps a more productive way to harness the power of negative affect is to expose the consumer to a distressing image and then provide a way to improve it. For example, a nonprofit organization might run an ad showing a starving child when it solicits donations. Helping others as a way to resolve one's own negative moods is known as **negative state relief**. Recently we've seen a trend in advertising toward inspirational stories that manipulate our emotions like a roller-coaster: Think about the commercials Budweiser ran during SuperBowls about a puppy who befriends a horse, gets lost, finds his way home, and so on. This practice even has a name: **sadvertising**.[33]

A study shows that this emotional element is especially potent for decisions that involve outcomes the person will experience shortly as opposed to those that involve a longer time frame.[34] Another study attests to the interplay between our emotions and how we access information in our minds that allows us to make smarter decisions. These researchers reported evidence for what they call an **emotional oracle effect**: People who trusted their feelings were able to predict future events better than those who did not; this occurred for a range of situations including the presidential election, the winner of *American Idol*, movie box office success, and the stock market. The likely reason is that those with more confidence were better able to access information they had learned that could help them make an informed forecast.[35]

Mood Congruency

We've already seen that cognitive dissonance occurs when our various feelings, beliefs, or behaviors don't line up, and we may be motivated to alter one or more of

these to restore consistency. We'll talk more about that in our discussion of attitudes in Chapter 8.

Mood congruency refers to the idea that our judgments tend to be shaped by our moods. For example, consumers judge the same products more positively when they are in a positive as opposed to a negative mood. This is why advertisers attempt to place their ads after humorous TV programming or create uplifting ad messages that put viewers in a good mood. Similarly, retailers work hard to make shoppers happy by playing "up" background music and encouraging staff to be friendly. Then of course there's the traditional "three-martini" business lunch . . .

Positive Affect

Our feelings also can serve as a source of information when we weigh the pros and cons of a decision. Put simply, the fact that the prospect of owning a specific brand will make a person feel good can give it a competitive advantage—even if the brand is similar on a functional level to other competing brands. That helps to explain why many of us will willingly pay a premium for a product that on the surface seems to do the same thing as a less expensive alternative—whether in the case of the hottest new Apple iPhone, a Justice shirt, or even a pricey university. A passionate commitment to one brand has famously been termed a **lovemark** by the head of the Saatchi & Saatchi advertising agency.

Happiness

Happiness is a mental state of well-being characterized by positive emotions. What makes us happy (other than an "A" in Consumer Behavior)? Apparently a lot of students want to know: Several Ivy League schools now offer for-credit courses on happiness![36]

Although many of us believe owning more shiny material goods is the key to happiness, research says otherwise. Several studies have reported that a greater emphasis on acquiring *things* actually links to lower levels of happiness!

Indeed some recent evidence suggests we are "wired" to engage in **material accumulation**, which is what researchers term the instinct to earn more than we can possibly consume, even when this imbalance makes us unhappy. In the first phase of a study to explore this idea, respondents were asked to listen to obnoxious white noise on a headset. They were told they could earn pieces of Dove chocolate when they listened to the white noise a certain number of times. They also were asked to estimate how may pieces of chocolate they could eat in a five-minute period after this phase. Respondents on average endured enough white noise to earn far more chocolates then even they predicted they could eat. In other words, they endured negative experiences to earn more than they knew they could possibly consume.[37]

Does money buy happiness? Not necessarily, but some research suggests that it can at least buy free time—and thus higher life satisfaction. With people feeling more time-poor than ever, many derive satisfaction when they make time-saving purchases, such as outsourcing chores or buying meal kits. A study of over 6,000 people in four countries reported that those who spent money on time-saving purchases reported greater life satisfaction, regardless of their income.[38]

Other work suggests that experiences beat out material acquisitions. In one study respondents were asked to think of either a material purchase (defined as a purchase made with the primary intention of acquiring a material possession) or

an experiential purchase (defined as a purchase made with the primary intention of acquiring a life experience). Even though the two scenarios were matched for the price paid, respondents were happier when they thought of experiential purchases.[39] In addition, the drivers of happiness also seem to vary throughout the life span. Younger people are more likely to associate happiness with excitement, whereas older people are more likely to associate this state with feelings of calm and peacefulness.[40]

Negative Affect

Although we may assume that marketers want to make us happy all the time, that's hardly the case. Marketing messages can make us sad, angry, or even depressed—and sometimes that's done on purpose! In a recent IKEA campaign, the company renames furniture to reflect the relationship problems that Swedish people most frequently Google to show that its products link to emotional needs. Thus if a person Googles "my partner is vain," they will find that a backlit mirror shows up in the search results.[41]



Many products cause us to have a strong emotional response.
Source: Title of Poster: Sour-faced Man; Advertising Agency: Hakuhodo Indonesia; Chief Creative Officer: Woon Hoh; Executive Creative Director: Chow Kok Keong; Creative Director: Nicholas Kosasih / Ahmad Ridwan Fitri; Art Director: Nicholas Kosasih / Chow Kok Keong / Vince Lee / Joshua Prakasa; Copywriter: Chow Kok Keong; Account Servicing: R.E. Budi Astuti Strategy Planner: Farhana Eldini Devi Attamimi; Production House: Illusion, Bangkok; Digital Imaging: Illusion, Bangkok; Client: PT. United Family Food; Product: Super Zuper Sour Candy.

Disgust

Many researchers believe that the primitive emotion of disgust evolved to protect us from contamination; we learned over the years to avoid putrid meat and other foul substances linked to pathogens. As a result, even the slight odor of something nasty elicits a universal reaction—the wrinkling of the nose, curling of the upper lips, and protrusion of the tongue. Wrinkling the nose has been shown to prevent pathogens from entering through the nasal cavity, and sticking out the tongue aids in the expulsion of tainted food and is a common precursor to vomiting.

Okay, now that you're sufficiently grossed out, what (you may ask in disgust) does this have to do with marketing and persuasion? Well, disgust also exerts a powerful effect on our judgments. People who experience this emotion become harsher in their judgments of moral offenses and offenders. In one experiment, people who sat in a foul-smelling room or at a desk cluttered with dirty food containers judged acts such as lying on a résumé or keeping a wallet found on the street as more immoral than individuals who were asked to make the same judgments in a clean environment. In another study, survey respondents who were randomly asked to complete the items while they stood in front of a hand sanitizer gave more conservative responses than those who stood in another part of the hallway.[42]

Advertisers used to avoid using negative imagery so they wouldn't turn people off, but many now realize that it actually can be productive to elicit extreme feelings such as disgust to get their message across:

- To discourage people from consuming sugary drinks, the New York Department of Health showed a man imbibing a soft drink—as he does the beverage turns into gobs of fat.
- Febreze ran a TV commercial where blindfolded people in a foul room believe it's actually a nice location because the air freshener covers up the stench.
- Lamisil is a medication for toenail fungus, so it's not too hard to generate feelings of disgust. The company created a creature it called "Digger" that excavates its way under people's nails—a safe bet it accomplished its objective.

Envy

Envy is a negative emotion associated with the desire to reduce the gap between oneself and someone who is superior on some dimension. Researchers distinguish between two types of envy: *Benign envy* occurs when we believe the other person actually deserves a coveted brand (like an iPhone). Under these circumstances the person may be willing to pay more to obtain the same item. *Malicious envy* occurs when the consumer believes the other person does not deserve his or her superior position. In this case consumers may not desire the product the other person owns, but they may be willing to pay more for a different brand in the same category (like a Samsung Galaxy) to set them apart from the other person.[43]

Guilt

Guilt is "an individual's unpleasant emotional state associated with possible objections to his or her actions, inaction, circumstances, or intentions."[44] Marketers may try to invoke a feeling of guilt when they want consumers to engage in prosocial behaviors such as giving to charities. These "guilt appeals" can be particularly effective when others are present because this approach activates a sense of social responsibility. However, extreme guilt appeals can backfire so often a more subtle approach is preferable.[45]

Embarrassment

Embarrassment is an emotion driven by a concern for what others think about us. To be embarrassed, we must be aware of, and care about, the audience that evaluates us.[46] This reaction also pops up in the consumer environment when we purchase socially sensitive products such as condoms, adult diapers, tampons, or hair-lice shampoo.[47] In these situations consumers get creative as they try to reduce embarrassment; they might try to hide a sensitive product among others in a shopping basket or choose a cashier who looks "more friendly" when they check out.

How Social Media Tap into Our Emotions

Since 1972, the tiny country of Bhutan has measured the Gross National Happiness of its citizens.[48] Devices like Fitbits and services like the Nike+ Training Club allow many of us to continuously monitor our well-being; at least in terms of steps walked or how well we slept.[49] A lot of our social media activity involves expressing affect, both positive and negative. We may share particularly good or bad feelings on Facebook or Twitter, or even resort to corny emoticons like :) in texts or emails, to convey how we feel. Proponents of a **happiness economy** claim that well-being is the new wealth, and social media technology is what allows us to accumulate it.

In contrast, researchers report that the longer people stay on Facebook, the *worse* they feel. Apparently this activity makes you feel like you're wasting your life; people say that compared to browsing the internet (or perhaps, studying) Facebook checking is less meaningful or useful. This judgment in turns leads to bad feelings.[50] Facebook routinely adjusts its users' news feeds, without their knowledge, to see what happens when they see different ad formats or numbers of ads. The company got into hot water when it admitted that it had manipulated the news feeds of more than 600,000 randomly selected users to change the number of positive and negative posts they saw. The goal was to determine if these posts then influenced what users posted. Sure enough, moods are contagious: people who saw more positive posts responded by writing more positive posts. Similarly, seeing more negative content prompted the viewers to be more negative in their own posts.[51]

And, the company itself has admitted that it has the potential to make people feel bad if they use it too much. In one study, people who clicked on more "likes" and links than the typical Facebook user reported worse physical and mental health. A former Facebook executive questioned publicly whether the platform has addicted us to "short-term, dopamine-driven feedback loops" that "are destroying how society works." But the company also pointed to another study it conducted that showed that using Facebook more deeply and meaningfully, for instance by posting comments and engaging in back-and-forth chats on the service, improved people's scores on well-being.[52]

Whether excessive posting makes us happy or sad, there's no doubt that the emotional reactions we share with our networks can be a treasure trove for marketers who want to learn more about how their offerings make people feel. A technique called **sentiment analysis** refers to a process (sometimes also called *opinion mining*) that scours the social media universe to collect and analyze the words people use when they describe a specific product or company. When people feel a particular way, they are likely to choose certain words that tend to relate to the emotion. From these words, the researcher creates a **word-phrase dictionary** (sometimes called a *library*) to code the data. The program scans the text to identify whether the words in the dictionary appear.

Consider this example based on Canon's PowerShot A540. A review on *Epinions*, a product review site, included this statement: "The Canon PowerShot A540 had good aperture and excellent resolution." A sentiment analysis would extract the entities of

interest from the sentence, identifying the product as the Canon PowerShot A540 and the relevant dimensions as aperture and resolution. The sentiment would then be extracted for each dimension: the sentiment for aperture is *good*, whereas that for resolution is *excellent*. Text-mining software would collect these reactions and combine them with others to paint a picture of how people are talking about the product.[53]

OBJECTIVE 5-3
The way we evaluate and choose a product depends on our degree of involvement with the product, the marketing message, or the purchase situation.

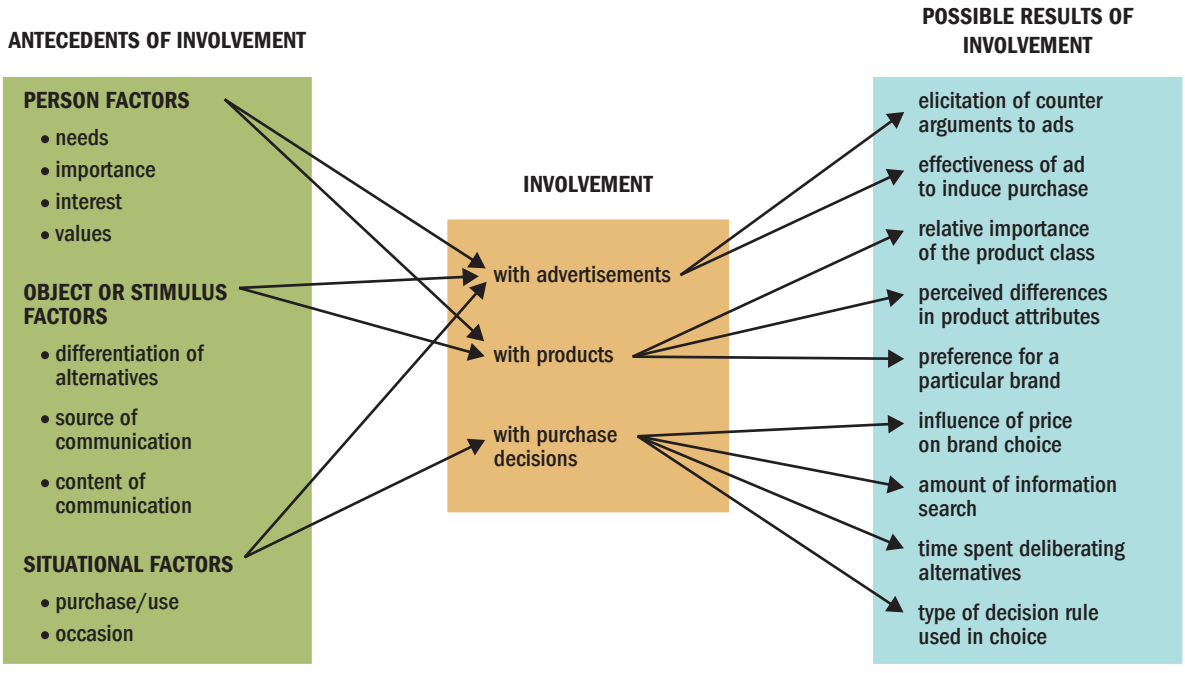
Consumer Involvement

Imagine this conversation between two shoppers at a car dealership:

Consumer #1: I want the one I read about in the latest issue of *Car and Driver* magazine: It has a six-cylinder turbo engine, a double-clutch transmission, a 90 strokebore, and 10:1 compression ratio.
Consumer #2: I want a red one.

Involvement is "a person's perceived relevance of the object based on their inherent needs, values, and interests."[54] Figure 5.3 illustrates that different factors may create involvement. These factors can be something about the person, something about the object, or something about the situation.

Our motivation to attain a goal increases our desire to acquire the products or services that we believe will satisfy it. However, as we see in the case of Consumer #2 at the car dealership, not everyone is motivated to the same extent. Involvement reflects our level of motivation to process information about a product or service we believe



The level of involvement may be influenced by one or more of these three factors. Interactions among persons, situation, and object factors are likely to occur.

Figure 5.3 CONCEPTUALIZING INVOLVEMENT

TABLE 5.1 A Scale to Measure Involvement

To Me [Object to Be Judged] Is		
1. important	_:_:_:_:_:_:_	unimportant
2. boring	_:_:_:_:_:_:_	interesting
3. relevant	_:_:_:_:_:_:_	irrelevant
4. exciting	_:_:_:_:_:_:_	unexciting
5. means nothing	_:_:_:_:_:_:_	means a lot to me
6. appealing	_:_:_:_:_:_:_	unappealing
7. fascinating	_:_:_:_:_:_:_	mundane
8. worthless	_:_:_:_:_:_:_	valuable
9. involving	_:_:_:_:_:_:_	uninvolving
10. not needed	_:_:_:_:_:_:_	needed

will help us to solve a problem or reach a goal.[55] Think of a person's degree of involvement as a continuum that ranges from absolute lack of interest in a marketing stimulus at one end to obsession at the other. **Inertia** describes consumption at the low end of involvement, where we make decisions out of habit because we lack the motivation to consider alternatives. Table 5.1 shows one of the most widely used scales to assess level of involvement.

Depending on whether the need we want to satisfy is utilitarian or hedonic (see Chapter 1), as our involvement increases we think more about the product ("I've spent the last three days researching mortgage interest rates") or we experience a strong emotional response ("I get goose bumps when I imagine what my daughter will look like in that bridal gown").[56] Not surprisingly, we tend to find higher levels of involvement in product categories that demand a big investment of money (like houses) or self-esteem (like clothing) and lower levels for mundane categories like household cleaners or hardware.[57] Still, bear in mind that virtually anything can qualify as highly involving to some people—just ask a "tool guy" to talk about his passion for hammers or plumbing supplies.

When Apple put its first iPhone on sale, thousands of adoring iCultists around the country (including the mayor of Philadelphia) waited in front of Apple stores for days to be one of the first to buy the device—even though they could order the phone online and have it delivered in three days. Somehow that was too long to wait for a cell phone with a touchscreen. As one loyal consumer admitted, "If Apple made sliced bread, yeah, I'd buy it."[58]

Cult products such as Apple—or Hydrox, Harley-Davidson, Jones Soda, Chick-Fil-A, Manolo Blahnik designer shoes (think Carrie on *Sex and the City*), and the Boston Red Sox—command fierce consumer loyalty, devotion, and maybe even worship by consumers.[59] A large majority of consumers agree that they are willing to pay more for a brand when they feel a personal connection to the company.[60]

Types of Involvement

A freelance software programmer named Winter is on a mission to visit every Starbucks in the world. To date he's been to more than 14,000 outlets in numerous countries. When he learned that a Starbucks store in British Columbia was scheduled to



This Brazilian ad for a hair-loss product appeals to men who take their impending baldness seriously.
Source: Art Director: Pedro Vargens, Creative Directors: Bruno Richter and Victor Vicente.

close the next day, he spent $1,400 to fly there immediately just to order a cup of coffee in the nick of time. He chronicles his odyssey on starbucksevery where.net.[61]

Okay, maybe Winter needs to get a life. Still, his passion demonstrates that involvement takes many forms. It can be cognitive, as when a "gearhead" is motivated to learn all he or she can about the latest specs of a new tablet, or emotional, as when the thought of a new Armani suit gives a clotheshorse the chills.[62] What's more, the act of *buying* the Armani may be highly involving for people who are passionately devoted to shopping.

To further complicate matters, advertisements such as those Nike or Adidas produce may themselves be involving for some reason (e.g., because they make us laugh or cry or inspire us to exercise harder). So, it seems that involvement is a fuzzy concept because it overlaps with other things and means different things to different people. Indeed, the consensus is that there are actually several broad types of involvement we can relate to the product, the message, or the perceiver.[63]

Product Involvement

Product involvement is a consumer's level of interest in a particular product. The more closely marketers can tie a brand to an individual, the higher the involvement they will create.

As a rule, product decisions are likely to be highly involving if the consumer believes there is a lot of **perceived risk**. This means the person believes there may be negative consequences if he or she chooses the wrong option. Risk is greater when a product is expensive or complicated. In some cases perceived risk also is a factor when others can see what we choose, and we may be embarrassed if we make the wrong choice.[64] Remember that a product does not necessarily have to cost a fortune or be hard to use to be risky—for example, a college senior who is going to a job interview may obsess about sweating too much and give a lot of thought to the brand of deodorant he or she uses that morning.

Figure 5.4 lists five kinds of risk—including objective (e.g., physical danger) and subjective (e.g., social embarrassment) factors—as well as the products each type tends to affect. Perceived risk is less of a problem for consumers who have greater

	BUYERS MOST SENSITIVE TO RISK	PURCHASES MOST SUBJECT TO RISK
MONETARY RISK	Risk capital consists of money and property. Those with relatively little income and wealth are most vulnerable.	High-ticket items that require substantial expenditures are most subject to this form of risk.
FUNCTIONAL RISK	Risk capital consists of alternative means of performing the function or meeting the need. Practical consumers are most sensitive.	Products or services whose purchase and use requires the buyer's exclusive commitment are most sensitive.
PHYSICAL RISK	Risk capital consists of physical vigor, health, and vitality. Those who are elderly, frail, or in ill health are most vulnerable.	Mechanical or electrical goods (such as vehicles or flammables), drugs and medical treatment, and food and beverages are most sensitive.
SOCIAL RISK	Risk capital consists of self-esteem and self-confidence. Those who are insecure and uncertain are most sensitive.	Socially visible or symbolic goods, such as clothes, jewelry, cars, homes, or sports equipment are most subject to social risk.
PSYCHO-LOGICAL RISK	Risk capital consists of affiliations and status. Those lacking self-respect or attractiveness to peers are most sensitive.	Expensive personal luxuries that may engender guilt, durables, and services whose use demands self-discipline or sacrifice are most sensitive.

Figure 5.4 FIVE TYPES OF PERCEIVED RISK

"risk capital," because they have less to lose from a poor choice. For example, a highly self-confident person might worry less than a vulnerable, insecure person who chooses a brand that peers think isn't cool.

When a consumer is highly involved with a specific product, this is the Holy Grail for marketers because it means he or she exhibits **brand loyalty**: Repeat purchasing behavior that reflects a conscious decision to continue buying the same brand.[65] Note that this definition states that the consumer not only buys the brand on a regular basis, but that he or she also has a strong positive attitude toward it rather than simply buying it out of habit. In fact, we often find that a brand-loyal consumer has more than simply a positive attitude; frequently he or she is passionate about the product. "True-blue" users react more vehemently when a company alters, redesigns, or (God forbid) eliminates a favorite brand. One simple test to find out if you're brand loyal: If the store is temporarily out of your favorite brand, will you buy a different product or hold off until you can get your first choice?

Although everyone wants to cultivate brand-loyal customers, there is a wrinkle that sometimes confounds even the most effective marketers. We often engage in *brand switching*, even if our current brand satisfies our needs. Sometimes, it seems we simply like to try new things; we crave variety as a form of stimulation or to reduce boredom. **Variety-seeking**, the desire to choose new alternatives over more familiar ones, even influences us to switch from our favorite products to ones we like less! This can occur even before we

become *satiated,* or tired, of our favorite. Research supports the idea that we are willing to trade enjoyment for variety because the unpredictability *itself* is rewarding.[66]

We're especially likely to look for variety when we are in a good mood, or when there isn't a lot of other stuff going on.[67] So, even though we have favorites, we still like to sample other possibilities. However, when the decision situation is ambiguous, or when there is little information about competing brands, we tend to opt for the safe choice.

Strategies to Increase Product Involvement

Here are a few ways to increase product involvement:

1. **Mass customization** describes the personalization of products and services for individual customers at a mass-production price. This product involvement strategy applies to a wide range of products and services, from newspaper websites that allow readers to choose which sections of the paper they want to see, to Dell computers that you can configure, to Levi's blue jeans that have a right leg one inch shorter than a left leg to fit an asymmetrical body (this is more common than you think).[68]
2. **DIY (Do It Yourself):** When we have the opportunity to personalize a product, our involvement increases because the item reflects our unique preferences. The DIY market is projected to reach almost $14 billion in just a few years. One reason for the boom: When we build the product ourselves, the value we attach to it increases because our own labor is involved.[69] Researchers term this the **IKEA Effect**. Of course, there may also be that unsettling feeling when you finish assembling a bookcase and there's still one part left over.
3. **Co-creation** strategies go a step farther, because the company works jointly with customers to create value. This approach is catching on in B2B environments, where organizations partner with their biggest clients to envision new solutions to their problems. For example, DHL developed robotics applications such as self-driving trolleys in warehouses that allow workers to pick merchandise for delivery in a more efficient way.[70] On the B2C side, Anheuser-Busch invited input from 25,000 beer drinkers when it developed a new lager called Black Crown.[1]
4. As we saw in Chapter 4, g*amification* is a red-hot marketing strategy today; it refers to the application of gaming principles to non-gaming contexts. This approach offers a way to dramatically increase involvement, especially for activities that can benefit from a bit of motivation. When the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) wanted to promote financial literacy, the government agency created its Money Smart program. It's designed to look like a board game similar to *Monopoly*, and it challenges players to learn financial skills such as setting up a bank account, paying bills on time, and avoiding identity theft. The game attracted more than 40,000 users in a year.[71]

Message Involvement

It started with Jay Z's celebrated campaign to promote his autobiographical *Decoded* book. The agency Droga5 created a national scavenger hunt when it hid all 320 pages of the book (mostly blown-up versions) in outdoor spots in 13 cities that somehow related to the text on each page (e.g., on cheeseburger wrappers in New York). Coldplay borrowed a page from this book more recently to promote its album *Ghost Stories*. The band hid lyric sheets inside ghost stories in libraries around the world and gave out clues on Twitter.[72] This represents an emerging way to engage consumers: In **alternate reality games (ARGs)**, thousands of people participate in a fictional story or competition to solve a mystery.



We value things more when our own labor contributes to making or assembling them.
Source: Maridav/Fotolia.

As these novel scavenger hunts illustrate, media vehicles possess different qualities that influence our motivation to pay attention to what they tell us, known as **message involvement**. Print is a *high-involvement medium* (whether it appears on a "dead tree" or in an e-book). The reader actively processes the information and (if desired) he or she is able to pause and reflect on it before turning the page.[73] In contrast, television is a *low-involvement medium* because it requires a passive viewer who exerts relatively little control (remote-control "zipping" notwithstanding) over content.

TV's passive nature explains why advertisers try to place their ads in shows such as *American Idol* that engage viewers; they want to increase the likelihood their audience will pay attention when their messages come on the screen. Research evidence indicates that a viewer who is more involved with a television show will respond more positively to commercials he or she sees during that show, and that these spots will have a greater chance to influence purchase intentions.[75] In fact, some messages (including really well-made advertisements) are so involving that they trigger a stage of **narrative transportation**, where people become immersed in the storyline. One study showed that people who are feeling lucky engage in this process when they look at an advertisement for a lottery; once immersed, it is hard to distract them from the message.[76] Not a great thing for compulsive gamblers, but a powerful effect nonetheless.

Strategies to Increase Message Involvement

Although consumers' involvement levels with a product message vary, marketers do not have to simply sit back and hope for the best. If they are aware of some basic factors that increase or decrease attention, they can take steps to increase the likelihood that product information will get through. A marketer can boost a person's motivation to process relevant information via one or more of the following techniques:[77]

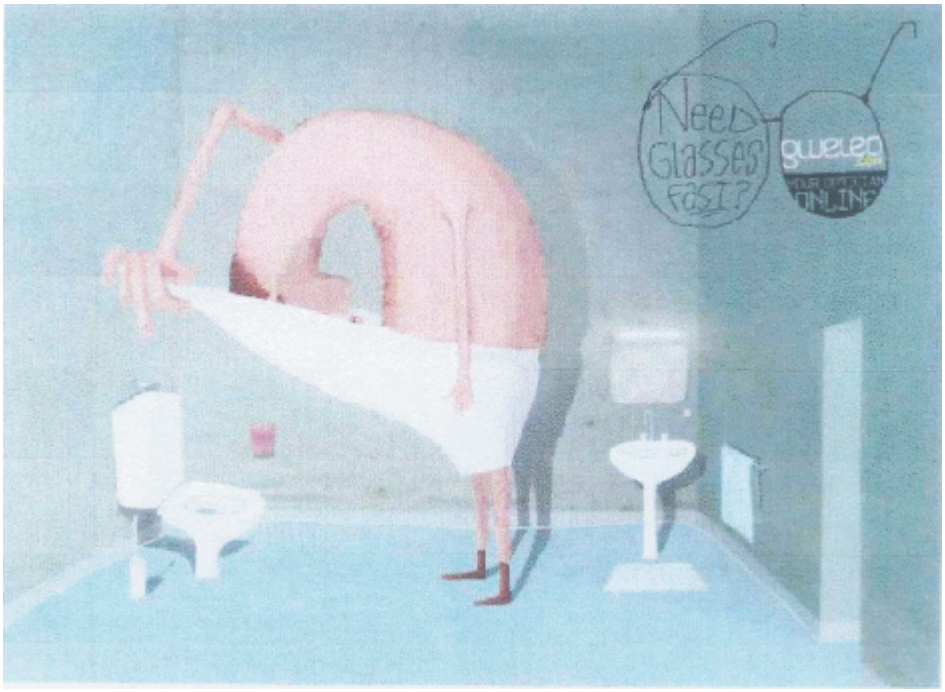
- **Use novel stimuli, such as unusual cinematography, sudden silences, or unexpected movements, in commercials.** When a British firm called Egg Banking introduced a credit card to the French market, its ad agency created unusual commercials to make people question their assumptions. One ad stated, "Cats always

Net Profit

The Nielsen research company wanted to see if the social media activity people participated in while they watched a TV show related to how involved they were with the action in the program. Sure enough, when they hooked up 300 people to brain monitors as they watched prime-time TV shows in a 2015 study, they found a strong relationship with the number of messages on Twitter during the same segments on these shows when they aired on live TV. Nielsen concludes that Twitter chatter is an accurate indicator of the overall audience's interest in a show, right down to the specific scene. In a separate study Nielsen also found that the volume of tweets about new shows before they launch can predict which premieres will attract the largest audiences.[74]

land on their paws," and then two researchers in white lab coats dropped a kitten off a rooftop—never to see it again (animal rights activists were not amused).[78]

- **Use prominent stimuli, such as loud music and fast action, to capture attention.** In print formats, larger ads increase attention. Also, viewers look longer at colored pictures than at black-and-white ones.
- **Include celebrity endorsers.** As we'll see in Chapter 8, people process more information when it comes from someone they admire or at least know about, whether Michael Jordan, Bill Gates, or maybe even Kim Kardashian.
- **Provide value that customers appreciate.** Charmin bathroom tissue set up public toilets in Times Square that hordes of grateful visitors used. Thousands more people (evidently with time on their hands) visited the brand's website to view the display.[79]
- **Invent new media platforms to grab attention.** Procter & Gamble printed trivia questions and answers on its Pringles snack chips with ink made of blue or red food coloring, and a company called Speaking Roses International patented a technology to laser-print words, images, or logos on flower petals.[80] An Australian firm creates hand stamps that nightclubs use to identify paying customers; the stamps include logos or ad messages so partiers' hands become an advertising platform.[81]
- **Encourage viewers to think about actually using the product.** If a person can imagine this, he or she is more likely to want to obtain the real thing. Research shows that even subtle cues in an advertisement can encourage this mental rehearsal. One simple example is orienting an image of a cup with its handle to the right so that (for a right-handed person) it matches the dominant hand and facilitates mental stimulation.[82]
- **Create spectacles where the message is itself a form of entertainment.** In the early days of radio and television, ads literally were performances; show hosts integrated marketing messages into the episodes. Today live advertising that features attention-grabbing events called **spectacles** is making a comeback as marketers try harder and harder to captivate jaded consumers:[83] Axe body



A novel or unexpected image can heighten involvement, especially for a less-than-thrilling business like an optician.
Source: luerzersarchive.net.

products sponsored a posh Hamptons (New York) nightclub for the whole season; it became The Axe Lounge, sporting branding on the DJ booth and menu and Axe products in the restrooms.

Situational Involvement

Situational involvement describes engagement with a store, website, or a location where people consume a product or service. Many retailers and event planners today focus on enhancing customers' experiences in stores, dealerships, and stadiums. Industry insiders refer to this as a "butts-in-seats" strategy. That's why some fans who attend Atlanta Falcons football games get visited by a cheerleader in the stands for a photo op, and also why Chrysler is ramping up its efforts to get people to test drive cars at dealerships and auto shows. As the head of the car company's "experiential marketing unit" explained, "We know a physical experience with a vehicle is a great way to allow people to try it out and move it up on their consideration list.[84]

Strategies to Increase Situational Involvement

Personalization: As we saw for product involvement, retailers can personalize the messages shoppers receive at the time of purchase. For example, a few marketers tailor the recommendations they give shoppers in a store based on what they picked up from a shelf. At some Dunkin' Donuts locations, a person who orders a morning coffee sees an ad at the cash register that pushes hash browns or breakfast sandwiches. And, of course recommendation agents that provide customized suggestions when we shop online perform much the same function.

High-tech: The point of purchase can be much more than a place to stack up stuff and wait for people to throw it in their carts. Exciting new technologies such as augmented reality, virtual reality, and beacons allow retailers to turn the shopping experience into an adventure. We'll revisit these options in Chapter 10.

Subscription boxes: Many startups such as FabFitFun, Birchbox Ipsy, Dollar Shave Club, and Graze deliver "surprises" of exotic food items, personal care



Product involvement often depends on the situation we're in. The Charmin toilet tissue brand sponsors a website, appropriately named SitOrSquat.com. The site helps travelers find the cleanest public restrooms wherever they happen to be. The brand manager explains, "Our goal is to connect Charmin with innovative conversations and solutions as a brand that understands the importance of bringing the best bathroom experience to consumers, even when they're away from home." According to Charmin, SitOrSquat lists over 52,000 toilets in 10 countries.
Source: Courtesy of The Procter & Gamble Company.

products, books, wine, clothing, and many other wondrous goodies on a regular basis to consumers who sign up. Subscription company websites attract about 37 million visitors a year, and that number has grown by over 800% in just three years. A website called My Subscription Addiction sums up the enthusiasm these services have generated for many thousands of variety junkies.[85]

MyLab Marketing

Visit www.pearson.com/mylab/marketing for Marketing Metrics questions available only in MyLab Marketing.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. **Products can satisfy a range of consumer needs.**

   Marketers try to satisfy consumers' needs, but the reason any product is purchased can vary widely. The identification of consumer motives is an important step to ensure that a product will meet the appropriate need(s). Traditional approaches to consumer behavior have focused on the abilities of products to satisfy rational needs (utilitarian motives), but hedonic motives (such as the need for exploration or fun) also guide many purchase decisions. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs demonstrates that the same product can satisfy different needs.

   Motivation refers to the processes that lead people to behave as they do. It occurs when a need is aroused that the consumer wishes to satisfy. A goal has *valence*, which means that it can be positive or negative. We direct our behavior toward goals we value positively; we are motivated to *approach* the goal and to seek out products that will help us to reach it. However, we may also be motivated to *avoid* a negative outcome rather than achieve a positive outcome.

2. **Consumers experience a range of affective responses to products and marketing messages.**

   Affective responses can be mild (evaluations), moderate (moods), or strong (emotions). Marketers often try to elicit a positive emotional response via advertising or other communication channels so that consumers form a bond (or *lovemark*) with their offering. A lot of the content on social media reflects affective responses that people post, so these platforms are a rich source of information for marketers to gauge how consumers feel about their brands.

3. **The way we evaluate and choose a product depends on our degree of involvement with the product, the marketing message, or the purchase situation.**

   Product involvement can range from low where consumers make purchase decisions based on inertia, to high where they form strong bonds with favorite brands (cult products). Marketing strategies also need to consider consumers' extent of engagement with the messages about their products and the environments in which consumption of these products occur.

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REVIEW

5-1 What is *motivation* and why is this idea so important to marketers?
5-2 Describe three types of motivational conflicts. Cite an example of each from a current marketing campaign.
5-3 Explain the difference between a need and a want.
5-4 What is *cognitive dissonance*?
5-5 Name the levels in Maslow's Hierarchy and give an example of a marketing appeal focused at each level.
5-6 List three types of perceived risk, and give an example of each.
5-7 What is the difference between a *mood* and an *emotion*?
5-8 What is *mood congruency* and how do advertisers use it?
5-9 What is *consumer involvement*? How does this concept relate to motivation?
5-10 What are some strategies marketers can use to increase consumers' involvement with their products?

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

5-11 Does money buy happiness? Why or why not?
5-12 Many consumers today seem to be obsessed with monitoring their emotions. They post about their feelings, track their sleep patterns, and fret about how often they're "liked" on social media. Should happiness be quantified?
5-13 What happens when advertising is embarrassing? A laxative product recently sponsored an Overnight Relief Sweepstakes with a slogan to suggest how the brand is supposed to work: "Enter today. Win tomorrow." It's become fairly commonplace in the United States to encounter ads for "unmentionables" like toilet paper, condoms, tampons, and erectile dysfunction medications such as Viagra and Cialis.[86] Is nothing sacred? Should "sensitive" products be advertised in public?
5-14 A group of psychologists argued that we need to revise Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. They propose we should delete "self-actualization" from the pinnacle and replace it with "parenting." Right below this peak, they added "mate retention" and "mate acquisition." They claim that too many people see Maslow's triangle as "aspirational"—a description of what fulfilled individuals "should" do—rather than as an explanation of how human motivation actually works. Their perspective is evolutionary; if the only purpose of art, music, and literature is self-fulfillment, how does that contribute to the survival of the species? One of the proponents of this view observes, "If you are a good poet or a good musician, there is a reproductive payoff: women are attracted to men with these abilities. What a man is saying when he is playing his guitar up there is 'look at my good genes.'" What do you think—do

our motivations to buy, have, and be ultimately come down to survival of our gene pool?[87]

5-15 The text discusses a study that says our moods actually get worse when we spend a lot of time on Facebook because we feel like we're wasting our time. Even Facebook acknowledges that "Simply broadcasting status updates wasn't enough; people had to interact one-on-one with others in their network" to gain great personal benefits from the service.[88] How might Facebook modify the platform to encourage users to post more "quality" content?

▶ APPLY

5-16 Our online behaviors also can satisfy needs at different levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, especially when we participate in social networks such as Facebook. Web-based companies can build loyalty if they keep these needs in mind when they design their offerings:

- We satisfy physiological needs when we use the internet to research topics such as nutrition or medical questions.
- The internet enables users to pool information and satisfy safety needs when they call attention to bad practices, flawed products, or even dangerous predators.
- Profile pages on Facebook allow users to define themselves as individuals.
- Online communities, blogs, and social networks provide recognition and achievement to those who cultivate a reputation for being especially helpful or expert in some subject.
- Users can seek help from others and connect with people who have similar tastes and interests.
- Access to invitation-only communities provides status.
- Spiritually-based online communities can provide guidance to troubled people.[89]

Interview people you know about their motivations to participate in social media. Ask them to provide a list of the platforms they access most. Then, for each, probe their reasons for visiting these. What needs do these sites appear to satisfy? How might these insights help you to devise ideas for new social media products?

5-17 Interview members of a celebrity fan club. Describe their level of involvement with the "product," and devise some marketing strategies to reach this group.

5-18 The text notes that marketers continue to push the envelope to create spectacles that will increase consumer involvement with their messages:

- A British show broadcast a group of skydivers who performed a dangerous jump to create a human formation in the air that spelled out the letters *H, O, N, D*, *A*.
- Honda built a musical road in Lancaster, PA; grooves in the cement create a series of pitches that play the "William Tell Overture" when a car drives over them.
- A New York campaign for Jameson Irish Whiskey projects an ad onto a wall—an operator scans the street for pedestrians who fit the brand's profile and inserts live text messages directed at them into the display.
- To promote the 25th anniversary of the Michael Jackson album *Thriller*, which featured zombies dancing in a music video of the title song, Sony BMG staged a performance in the London Underground. A group of "passengers" suddenly burst into a zombie-like dance before they disappeared into the crowd, and this videotaped scene was posted online. The video inspired similar performances in other countries, and within a week more than a million people had downloaded these films. In a similar stunt for T-Mobile, several hundred commuters at the Liverpool rail station broke into a dance; more than 15 million people watched the performance on YouTube in the following weeks. These (not so) spontaneous *flash-mobs* have become increasingly common.

Can you top these? Imagine that a client hires you to launch a new energy drink. Propose a *spectacle* you could engineer that would attract potential customers to learn more about your product.

CASE STUDY

The Louis Vuitton $2900 Smartwatch—High Tech or High Fashion? It's All in the Eye of the Beholder

When Apple introduced the Apple Watch in 2015, it was unclear whether the company would revolutionize the watch industry as it did with MP3 players, cell phones, and tablet computers.[90] With recent Apple Watch unit sales second only to legendary watchmaker Rolex, that question has been answered.[91] Now fashion leader Louis Vuitton is asking a new question: Will consumers pay $2,900 for a smartwatch? In answering that question, shoppers will have to answer another: is this technology, or is it fashion?

Louis Vuitton began its fashion dynasty when its namesake started his luggage business in Paris in 1854, where Louis apprenticed making trunks under master trunk maker Monsieur Maréchal. After only four years, Vuitton created an innovation in trunk making: the first trunk to have a flat top and bottom. It was a hit and by the 1860s, in Paris he opened the world's largest store for travel items. His fame spread, largely due to a "celebrity endorsement" from Empress Eugenie, the wife of Napoleon III. Soon, his client list included no less than financier J.P. Morgan, artist Henri Matisse, the Rothschild banking family, and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.[92] One hundred years later, the product line expanded to women's handbags. Today, the Louis Vuitton logo can be found on everything from denim jackets ($4,050), to backpacks ($2,040), to t-shirts (yours for only $505).[93]

The company added traditional mechanical watches to its product line in 2002, branding it as the Tambour collection (*Tambour* is French for "drum," referring to the barrel-drum or case that houses the mainspring). But the company was late to the party with its entry into the product category of computer "wearables"—devices embedded in apparel and fashion accessories.[94] Other famous designers such as Michael Kors, Rebecca Minkoff, and Kate Spade had already jumped into the luxury smartwatch market.[95] So, the Tambour Horizon smartwatch needed something special to stand out. Some fashion observers believe the company delivered.[96]

The Tambour Horizon is built on Google's Android technology, and it includes many features standard to the category such as email and text alerts, and step counting.[97] It also includes apps Google created especially for Louis Vuitton. A built-in City Guide provides information on the best addresses and sites to see in seven of the world's most visited cities based on Vuitton's well-known travel guidebooks. A geolocation capability alerts you to tourist attractions, hotspots, and restaurants in your vicinity.[98] With the GMT function, you display the name of a city on the screen and the corresponding local time appears.[99]

Notice anything these apps have in common? All relate to travel, appropriate for the jet setters who carry Louis Vuitton luggage as they move among world-class cities.

But it's the form, not the function, that Louis Vuitton hopes will distinguish its entry in the market. A 24-hour engraved bezel is encased under a sapphire crystal, but the face of the watch is what you make it. Choose one of the famous Vuitton looks such as Monogram, Damier, or colored stripes, or use your own initials—the ultimate "bespoke" model.[100] Wearers can customize the look further with one of 60 interchangeable straps, which they can easily change with a patented system made from a carbon-enriched composite material.[101,102]

How will potential customers evaluate the Horizon Tambour? What process will they use to decide whether it is worth the $2,900 that Louis Vuitton is asking? As both a technology and a fashion product, the Horizon fits into the category known as a *hybrid* wearable, and as a higher end offering, a *luxury hybrid.*[103] This is important to consider because it reveals the identity problem products like this face. Louis Vuitton's original line of watches was clearly all about fashion—they reliably tell time, but were mostly about the look, the image, and reputation attached to the brand. While many shoppers will focus on that fashion aspect, some will lean toward the tech functionality, and others will care deeply about both. What's a marketer to do?

It is largely up to marketers to "self-identify" their products as being in one category or another through their promotional communications. We can see a strong clue to Louis Vuitton's choice in the advertising the company created to launch the product. For its teaser advertising on Instagram, a video showed close-ups of the faces of different people in the center of the Tambour Horizon bezel. Each of the actors proclaims, "Don't take time. Let it take you."[104,105] The videos said nothing about features, apps, or battery life. Although the company's website provides summaries of the key applications, its print communications are typical fashion advertising that focus on a glamorous model who wears the product. Further, the company does not even emphasize that the watch is Android compatible.[106]

But what about that price? Luxury watchmakers have commanded high prices for their products for many years, in part because of the products' heirloom value. One of the priciest, Patek Phillippe, has for over twenty years told us that, "You never actually own a Patek Phillippe. You merely look after it for the next generation."[107] But given the pace of change in computer technology, this old school logic may not work for smartwatch buyers.[108]

As with most luxury items, shoppers will be drawn to these high priced products because they shout exclusivity, prestige, and uniqueness. It's interesting to note what this smartwatch does not have: A heartbeat monitor, preventing wearers from capturing their increased heart rate as friends look at them with envy! And the product's relatively short list of functions may be a good thing. A recent study found that products such as these luxury smartwatches should not have too many features, lest wearers no longer consider them unique.[109]

Do you recall the difference between needs and wants? Smart watches satisfy a long list of contemporary functional *needs*: Immediate communication, health tracking, mobile payments, alerts, and yes, they also tell time. The luxury version also meets the needs of status, self-expression, and the desire to be a part of an "in" group. With those priorities in either the front or back of the minds of consumers, they will have to decide whether they *want* the Louis Vuitton Tambour Horizon badly enough to shell out $2,900 to meet those needs. As we saw in the chapter, motivation is everything.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 5-1 First, identify the level in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs into which the Tambour Horizon best fits. Next, make a case for how it could fit into each of the other categories.

CS 5-2 How could Louis Vuitton's choice of distribution channel affect how shoppers perceive and evaluate the Tambour Horizon?

CS 5-3 Consider the five types of perceived risk. Which ones might be at play in the purchase of a luxury smartwatch?

MyLab Marketing

If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

5-19 The basic lesson of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is that we must first satisfy basic needs before we progress up the ladder (a starving man is not interested in status symbols, friendship, or self-fulfillment). This implies that consumers value different product attributes depending on what is currently available to them. In today's economic environment, the hierarchy helps to explain why many consumers take a closer look at the price and reliability of a product rather than whether it will impress their friends. How do you believe the recession changed the way consumers evaluate products? Do you agree that the priorities many now place on "value-priced" brands is the "new normal," or will our attitudes change now that the economy has improved?

5-20 Our emotional reactions to marketing cues are so powerful that some high-tech companies study mood in small doses (in 1/30 of a second increments) as they analyze people's facial reactions when they see ads or new products. They measure happiness as they look for differences between, for example, a *true smile* (which includes a relaxation of the upper eyelid) and a *social smile* (which occurs only around the mouth). Whirlpool used this technique to test consumers' emotional reactions to a yet-to-be-launched generation of its Duet washers and dryers. The company's goal: To design an appliance that will actually make people happy. Researchers discovered that even though test subjects said they weren't thrilled with some out-of-the-box design options, such as unusual color combinations, their facial expressions said otherwise.[110] Does the ability to study our emotional reactions at such a specific level give marketers an unfair advantage?

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6 The Self: Mind, Gender, and Body

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why:

6-1 The self-concept strongly influences consumer behavior.

6-2 Gender identity is an important component of a consumer's self-concept.

6-3 The way we think about our bodies (and the way our culture tells us we should think) is a key component of self-esteem.



Source: gpointstudio/Shutterstock.

Lisa is trying to concentrate on the report her client expects by five o'clock. She has worked hard to maintain this important account for the firm, but today she is distracted thinking about her date with Eric last night. Although things seemed to go okay, she couldn't shake the feeling that Eric regards her more as a friend than as a potential romantic partner. As she leafs through *Glamour* and *Cosmopolitan* during her lunch hour, Lisa is struck by all the articles that offer tips on how to become more attractive by dieting, exercising, and wearing sexy clothes. She begins to feel depressed as she looks at the svelte models in the many advertisements for perfumes, apparel, and makeup. Each woman is more glamorous and beautiful than the last. Surely they've had "adjustments"; women simply don't look that way in real life. Then again, it's unlikely that Eric could ever be mistaken for Zac Efron on the street. Still, in her down mood, Lisa actually thinks that maybe she should look into cosmetic surgery. Even though she's never considered herself unattractive, maybe if she got a new nose or removed that mole on her cheek she'd feel better about herself. Who knows, she might look so good she'll get up the nerve to submit a photo to that website Tinder that everyone's talking about. But on second thought, is Eric even worth it?

OBJECTIVE 6-1
The Self-Concept Strongly Influences Consumer Behavior.

The Self

Are you what you buy? Lisa isn't the only person who feels that her physical appearance and possessions affect her "value" as a person. We choose many products, from cars to cologne, because we want to highlight or hide some

aspect of the self. In this chapter, we'll focus on how consumers' feelings about themselves shape their consumption practices, particularly as they strive to fulfill their society's expectations about how a male or female should look and act.

Does the Self Exist?

Most of us can't boast of coming close to Katy Perry's 108 million followers on Twitter, but many of us do have hundreds of followers, in addition to legions of Facebook friends.[1] The explosion of these and other social networking services enables everyone to focus on himself or herself and share mundane or scintillating details about life with anyone who's interested (*why* they are interested is another story!).

An emphasis on the unique nature of the self is much greater in Western societies.[2] Many Eastern cultures stress the importance of a **collective self**, where a person derives his or her identity in large measure from a social group. Both Eastern and Western cultures believe that the self divides into an inner, private self and an outer, public self. Where cultures differ is in terms of which part they see as the "real you"; the West tends to subscribe to an independent understanding of the self, which emphasizes the inherent separateness of each individual.

Non-Western cultures, in contrast, tend to focus on an interdependent self where we define our identities largely by our relationships with others.[3] For example, a Confucian perspective stresses the importance of "face": others' perceptions of the self and maintaining one's desired status in their eyes. One dimension of face is *mien-tzu*, the reputation one achieves through success and ostentation. Some Asian cultures developed explicit rules about the specific garments and even colors that certain social classes and occupations were allowed to display. These traditions live on today in Japanese style manuals that set out detailed instructions for dressing and how to address people of differing status.[4] That orientation is a bit at odds with such Western conventions as "casual Friday," which encourages employees to express their unique selves through dress (at least short of muscle shirts and flip-flops).

Self-Concept

The **self-concept** summarizes the beliefs a person holds about his or her own attributes and how he or she evaluates the self on these qualities. Although your overall self-concept may be positive, there certainly are parts of it you evaluate more positively than others. For example, Lisa feels better about her professional identity than she does about her feminine identity.

The self-concept is a complex structure. We describe attributes of self-concept along such dimensions as *content* (e.g., facial attractiveness versus mental aptitude), *positivity* (i.e., self-esteem), *intensity and stability* over time, and *accuracy* (i.e., the degree to which one's self-assessment corresponds to reality).[5] As we'll see later in this chapter, consumers' self-assessments can be quite distorted, especially with regard to their physical appearance. In addition, our own estimates of how much we change over time vary as well: A study that included both young and old people asked more than 19,000 respondents about their preferences in the past (foods, vacations, hobbies, and bands) and also to predict how their tastes will change in the future. Regardless of age, people acknowledged that their prior choices had changed quite a bit over time, but they still tended to predict that they would not change as they got older.[6]

A person's self-concept is a work in progress. Some parts are fairly stable, but each of us modifies some elements of it as we make our way through life—and particularly as we discover new ideas, social groups we admire, and yes, images we receive from the culture around us that endorse certain types of people over others. Each element that contributes to our self-concept is an **identity**. One way to define identity is "any category label with which a consumer self-associates that is amenable to a clear picture of what a person in that category looks like, thinks, feels and does." Some of these identities are pretty stable (e.g., mother, African American), whereas other identities are more temporary and likely to change (e.g., Libertarian, college student, Prius driver).[7]

As we'll see in Chapter 7, marketers try hard to understand which consumers adopt certain identities and then develop products and messages that meet the needs of people who link themselves to a given identity. So for example a person who sees herself as environmentally responsible is more likely than someone who doesn't think much about that to drive a Prius hybrid vehicle. "Green" products are more likely to get that person's attention.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem refers to the positivity of a person's self-concept. People with low self-esteem expect that they will not perform very well, and they will try to avoid embarrassment, failure, or rejection. When Sara Lee developed a new line of snack cakes, for example, researchers found that consumers low in self-esteem preferred portion-controlled snack items because they felt they lacked self-control.[8] In contrast, a more recent study found that individuals who are made to feel powerful spend more money on themselves ("because I'm worth it!"), whereas those who experience a feeling of powerlessness spend more on others than on themselves.[9]

How do marketers influence self-esteem? Exposure to ads such as the ones Lisa checked out can trigger a process of **social comparison**, in which the person tries to evaluate her appearance by comparing it to the people depicted in these artificial images.[10] This is a basic human tendency, and many marketers tap into our need for benchmarks when they supply idealized images of happy, attractive people who just happen to use their products. An ad campaign for Clearasil is a good example. In one typical ad, two teenage boys enter a kitchen where a 40-ish mother is mixing something in a bowl. When her son leaves the room, his friend hits on Mom. The ad's tagline: "Clearasil may cause confidence."

Despite the saying, "beauty is only skin deep," almost half of American women feel appearance is the most important aspect of their identity—more so than motherhood, their career, where they grew up, or their religion.[11] This priority means that many people have a lot at stake when they think about how they look and how this reflects on their worth as individuals. To compound the problem, when we're surrounded by beautiful people, the relentless social comparison often works in a negative way as our self-judgments take a plunge. In a study that illustrates the social comparison process, female college students who were exposed to beautiful women in advertisements afterward expressed lowered satisfaction with their own appearance, as compared to other participants who did not view ads with attractive models.[12] Another study reported that young women alter their perceptions of their own body shapes and sizes after they watch as little as 30 minutes of TV programming.[13] Researchers report similar findings for men.[14] And, apparently even beautiful store mannequins may have the opposite effect than retailers assume: When people who are low in appearance self-esteem encounter one, they feel threatened and tend to denigrate the products the model wears.[15]



Some products promise to give our self-esteem a boost.
Source: Orbit and all affiliated designs are owned by and used courtesy of the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company or its affiliates.

Real and Ideal Selves

When a consumer compares some aspect of himself or herself to an ideal, this judgment influences self-esteem. He or she might ask, "Am I as good-looking as I would like to be?" or "Do I make as much money as I should?" The **ideal self** is a person's conception of how he or she would like to be, whereas the **actual self** refers to our more realistic appraisal of the qualities we do and don't have. We choose some products because we think they are consistent with our actual self, whereas we buy others to help us reach an ideal standard. We also often engage in a process of **impression management** in which we work hard to "manage" what others think of us; we strategically choose clothing and other products that will show us off to others in a good

light.[16] The dating app Tinder helpfully provides a feature called Smart Photos to boost your chances: Using an algorithm, it analyses which of your profile pictures performs the best and ranks them in order for you, hoping to get more people swiping right. As Tinder's founder observed, "First impressions matter. We're empowering users to put their best foot forward."[17] New advances in social media such as Snapchat's various filters even allow us to merge our identities with others to create "interesting" hybrids. In a first, to promote the movie *X-Men: Apocalypse* users could temporarily replace or overlay their faces with the faces and costumes of a character from the flick, from Magneto to Professor X. Although this was the first time a brand took over Snapchat, it probably won't be the last so you can count on many opportunities to see what you'd look like as a superhero, candy bar, or . . . [18]

In addition to our real and ideal selves, a third form of the self sometimes influences what we choose to buy and use: Our **avoidance selves**.[19] This refers to the type of person we don't want to be. Sometimes our desire to distance ourselves from undesirable types can be an even bigger driver as we go out of our way not to buy products we associate with that category. For example, kids may work hard to avoid clothing or other items that make them look like a "nerd."

Or, there are many female teens who identify with the **snackwave** label. They deliberately binge on unhealthy foods as a way to rebel against all the messages they get about healthy eating. One of the early heroines of this avoidance self was the character Rory in the sitcom *Gilmore Girls.* She was an outspoken teenager who exclusively ate junk food and drank coffee. Later role models include the singers Cassie Ramone and Katy Goodman of Vivian Girls who proudly sported cheeseburger and milkshake tattoos, Liz Lemon (Tina Fey) in *30 Rock*, and Lena Dunham's character Hannah Horvath in *Girls*.[20]

Marketing Pitfall

A word to the wise: Corporate recruiters often complain about students who show up for job interviews in sloppy or revealing clothing; these applicants failed to "read the memo" about which role they're expected to play in professional settings! Opportunities for impression management abound, and this includes how you act at business dinners or networking events. Indeed researchers found evidence of an **Imbibing Idiot Bias**: Even when they are not actually impaired, people who simply *hold* an alcoholic beverage are perceived to be less intelligent than those who do not. Job candidates who ordered wine during an interview held over dinner were viewed as less intelligent and less hireable than candidates who ordered soda. Ironically, the job candidates themselves believed that ordering wine rather than soda helped them to appear more intelligent![21]

Fantasy: Bridging the Gap Between the Selves

Most people experience a discrepancy between their real and ideal selves, but for some consumers this gap is especially large. These people are especially good targets for marketing communications that employ *fantasy appeals*.[22] A **fantasy** or daydream is a self-induced shift in consciousness, which is sometimes a way to compensate for a lack of external stimulation or to escape from problems in the real world. Many products and services succeed because they appeal to our fantasies. An ad may transport us to an unfamiliar, exciting situation; things we purchase may permit us to "try on" interesting or provocative roles.

New **virtual makeover** technologies make it even easier for each of us to involve the digital self as we choose products to adorn our physical selves. These platforms allow the shopper to superimpose images on their faces or bodies so that they can quickly and easily see how products would alter appearance, without taking the risk of actually buying the item first. The online glasses merchant Warby Parker allows consumers to upload a picture of themselves and try on frames virtually. Other apps such as Perfect 365 and Face Tune let you touch up your photo so you can remove a pimple, a wrinkle, or even a few pounds before you post it on Instagram or Facebook for others to admire.[23] Companies including Sephora and Mary Kay provide simulators that allow women to see how their brands look before they buy.

Multiple Selves

In a way, each of us really is a number of different people—for example, your mother probably would not recognize the "you" who emerges from a party at 2:00 a.m! We

have as many selves as we do different social roles. Depending on the situation, we act differently, use different products and services, and even vary in terms of how much we *like* the aspect of ourselves we put on display. A person may require a different set of products to play each of her roles: She may choose a sedate, understated perfume when she plays her professional self, but splash on something more provocative on Saturday night as she transitions to her *femme fatale* self.

The **dramaturgical perspective** on consumer behavior views people as actors who play different roles. We each play many roles, and each has its own script, props, and costumes.[24] The self has different components, or *role identities*, and only some of these are active at any given time. Some identities (e.g., husband, boss, student) are more central to the self than others, but other identities (e.g., dancer, gearhead, or advocate for the homeless) may dominate in specific situations.[25] Indeed, some roles may conflict with one another. For example, one study of Iranian young people who live in the United Kingdom described what the authors termed the **torn self**, where respondents struggle with retaining an authentic culture while still enjoying Western freedom (and dealing with assumptions of others who believe they might be terrorists).[26]

Strategically, this means a marketer may want to ensure that the appropriate role identity is active before pitching products that customers need to play a particular role. One obvious way to do this is to place advertising messages in contexts in which people are likely to be well aware of that role identity; for example, when fortified-drink and energy-bar companies hand out free product samples to runners at a marathon.

If each person potentially has many social selves, how does each develop? How do we decide which self to "activate" at any point in time? The sociological tradition of **symbolic interactionism** stresses that relationships with other people play a large part to form the self.[27] According to this perspective, we exist in a symbolic environment. We assign meaning to any situation or object when we interpret the symbols in this environment. As members of society, individuals learn to agree on shared meanings. Thus, we "know" that a red light means stop, the "golden arches" mean fast food, and Queen Bey is Beyoncé's nickname. That knowledge is important to understand consumer behavior because it implies that our possessions play a key role as we evaluate ourselves and decide "who we are."[28]

The Looking-Glass Self

Bloomingdales and some other clothing stores are testing interactive dressing rooms: When you choose a garment, the mirror superimposes it on your reflection so that you can see how it would look on your body without having to go to the trouble of trying it on.[29] Exciting stuff, but in a way this fancy technology simply simulates the "primping" process many shoppers undergo when they prance in front of a mirror and try to imagine how a garment will look on them—and whether others will approve or not.

Sociologists call the process of imagining others' reactions "taking the role of the other," or the **looking-glass self**.[30] According to this view, our desire to define ourselves operates as a sort of psychological sonar: We take readings of our own identity when we "bounce" signals off others and try to project their impression of us. Like the distorted mirrors in a funhouse, our appraisal of who we are varies depending on whose perspective we consider and how accurately we predict their evaluations of us. In symbolic interactionist terms, we *negotiate* these meanings over time. Essentially we continually ask ourselves the question: "*Who am I* in this situation?" Those

around us greatly influence how we answer this query because we also ask, "Who do *other people* think I am?" We tend to pattern our behavior on the perceived expectations of others, as a form of **self-fulfilling prophecy**. When we act the way we assume others *expect* us to act, we often confirm these perceptions.

A confident career woman may sit morosely at a nightclub, imagining that others see her as a dowdy, unattractive woman with little sex appeal (regardless of whether these perceptions are true). A self-fulfilling prophecy like the one we described comes into play here because these "signals" influence the woman's actual behavior. If she doesn't believe she's attractive, she may choose frumpy, unflattering clothing that actually does make her less attractive. The next morning at work, however, her self-confidence at the office may cause her to assume that others hold her "executive self" in even higher regard than they actually do (we all know people like that)!

Self-Consciousness

Have you ever walked into a class in the middle of a lecture? If you were convinced that all eyes were on you as you awkwardly searched for a seat, you can understand the feeling of *self-consciousness*. In contrast, sometimes we behave with shockingly little self-consciousness. For example, we may do things in a stadium, at a riot, or at a fraternity party that we would never do if we were highly conscious of our behavior (and add insult to injury when we post these escapades to our Facebook page!).[31] Of course, certain cues in the environment, such as walking in front of a mirror, are likely to promote self-consciousness. That feeling in turn may influence behavior. For example, one pair of researchers is looking at whether grocery shoppers who push a cart with an attached mirror will buy more produce and healthy foods because their heightened self-consciousness makes them more weight conscious.[32]

Some people seem to be more sensitive in general to the image they communicate to others. However, we all know people who act as if they're oblivious to the impression they make. A heightened concern about the nature of one's public "image" also results in more concern about the social appropriateness of products and consumption activities.

Consumers who score high on a scale of **public self-consciousness** express more interest in clothing and use more cosmetics than others who score lower.[33] In one study, highly self-conscious subjects expressed greater willingness to buy personal products, such as a douche or a gas-prevention remedy, that are somewhat embarrassing to buy but may avoid awkward public incidents later.[34]

Similarly, high **self-monitors** are more attuned to how they present themselves in their social environments, and their estimates of how others will perceive their product choices influence what they choose to buy.[35] A scale to measure self-monitoring asks consumers how much they agree with statements such as "I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain others" or "I would probably make a good actor." Perhaps not surprisingly, publicly visible types such as college football players and fashion models tend to score higher on these dimensions.[36]

Self-consciousness on steroids—perhaps that's what we're experiencing in what historians looking back might call "The Era of the Selfie." A **selfie**, or a picture a smartphone user takes of him- or herself on a smartphone (whether or not it's attached to a selfie stick) is a common form of communication, especially for Millennials. Indeed, about three-quarters of images people share on Snapchat are selfies, and 1,000 selfies are posted to Instagram every 10 seconds.[37] One study analyzed 2.5 million images to determine just what kinds of selfies tend to get posted the most.

The researchers reported that about half were of people showing off their make-up, clothes, lips, and so on.[38]

What explains the infatuation many of us seem to have with photographing ourselves? One simple reason: Because we can. Obviously the widespread adoption of smartphones makes it easy to do. But there may be other reasons as well. One explanation hinges on the concept of the **empty self**. This perspective points to the decline of shared points of reference over the last 50 years as we witnessed a decline in family, community, and traditions. As a result, people have shifted inward and a focus on the self is an unconscious way to compensate for what we have lost. Indeed when we look at young people (more on this in Chapter 13), we do observe a decline in marriage rates and a low amount of trust people place in government, corporations, and organized religion. The increasing focus on self-reliance in turn creates a culture of narcissism, where we are obsessed with what we do and feel the need to constantly record it (updating our relationship status on Facebook, posting selfies and photos of our meals on Instagram, and so on).[39]

Perhaps that's an overly bleak assessment, but it does help to explain why the average Millennial checks his or her smartphone 150 times per day.[40] Here's the irony: Research shows that although people believe taking pictures during an event enhances their enjoyment, the opposite is true. There is a tendency to become preoccupied with documenting the moment—the more pictures people take, the less they say they enjoy the actual experience.[41]

Are We What We Buy?

Way back in 1890, the famous psychologist William James wrote, "A man's self is the sum total of all that he can call his." And that was before iPhones, Diesel jeans, and Igloo dorm-size refrigerators! **Self-image congruence models** suggest that we choose products when their attributes match some aspect of the self.[45] And when we choose a product that we think is aesthetically pleasing, this choice makes us feel better about ourselves.[46] Indeed recent research that included brain wave measures such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) showed that when a person has a close relationship with a brand this activates the insula, a brain area responsible for urging, addiction, loss aversion, and interpersonal love.[47]

These emotional connections even make people defensive of their favorite brands if they see negative information about them. A comment by a respondent (a 32-year-old male) in one study nicely illustrates this bond: "My BMW is my wingman, my twin. I would never diss it for another car because that would be like dissing my twin brother or worse, dissing myself."[48] This guy's fondness for his vehicle is hardly unique; more than a third of Americans have nicknames for their cars. That bond explains the wording of a recent TV commercial for SafeAuto insurance as a mom drives her kids around in a well-used minivan: "For years you and this supercharged piece of eye candy have done much more than make car payments, buy gas and change the oil. You've lived, really lived, and you're most certainly not done . . . "[49]

Congruence models assume a process of *cognitive matching* between product attributes and the consumer's self-image.[50] Over time we tend to form relationships with products that resemble the bonds we create with other people: These include love, unrequited love (we yearn for it but can't have it), respect, and perhaps even fear or hate ("why is my computer out to get me?").[51] Researchers even report that after a "breakup" with a brand, people tend to develop strong negative feelings and will go to great lengths to discredit it, including bad-mouthing and even vandalism.[52]

The Tangled Web

Job applicants who post outrageous selfies (that must have been a pretty wild party . . .) may come to regret their actions as potential employers start to check out their pages before they look at the would-be candidates' résumés. Some even turn to services such as Reputation.com that scour the internet to remove embarrassing postings before the boss (or Mom) sees them.[42] Cell phones have spawned yet another way for teens to share intimate details about themselves online. The phenomenon of **sexting**, in which kids post nude or semi-nude photos of themselves online, is growing. In one recent survey of a sample of college students, more than half of respondents admitted to sexting as minors, and most were unaware that these acts have potential legal consequences.[43] Your online photos may be a lot more public than you think, and marketers find ways to use them, too. Digital marketing companies scan photo-sharing sites such as Instagram, Flickr, and Pinterest when they work for major advertisers. They use scanning software that identifies whether a person is holding a brand with a logo (like a Coke can) and what the person is doing in the picture. This information is useful to send targeted messages to consumers and to provide feedback to clients about how people use their brands. For example, Kraft Foods pays a company to find out what people drink when they eat macaroni and cheese.[44]

Research largely supports the idea of congruence between product usage and self-image. One of the earliest studies to examine this process found that car owners' ratings of themselves tended to match their perceptions of their cars: Pontiac drivers saw themselves as more active and flashy than did Volkswagen drivers.[53] Indeed, a German study found that observers were able to match photos of male and female drivers to pictures of the cars they drove almost 70 percent of the time.[54] Researchers also report congruity between consumers and their most preferred brands of beer, soap, toothpaste, and cigarettes relative to their least preferred brands, as well as between consumers' self-images and their favorite stores.[55] Some specific attributes useful to describe matches between consumers and products include rugged/delicate, excitable/calm, rational/emotional, and formal/informal.[56]

Although these findings make some intuitive sense, we cannot blithely assume that consumers will always buy products whose characteristics match their own. It is not clear that consumers really see aspects of themselves in down-to-earth, functional products that don't have complex or humanlike images. It is one thing to consider a brand personality for an expressive, image-oriented product, such as perfume, and quite another to impute human characteristics to a toaster.

Another problem is the old "chicken-and-egg" question: Do people buy products because they see these as similar to themselves, or do people assume that these products must be similar to themselves because they bought them? The similarity between a person's self-image and the images of products purchased does tend to increase over the time the product is owned, so we can't rule out this explanation.

Remember that the reflected self helps shape self-concept, which implies that people see themselves as they imagine others see them. Because what others see includes a person's clothing, jewelry, furniture, car, and so on, it stands to reason that these products also help to create the perceived self. A consumer's possessions place him or her into a social role, which helps to answer the question, "Who am I now?"

People use an individual's consumption behaviors to identify that person's social identity. In addition to checking out a person's clothes and grooming habits, we make inferences about personality based on his or her choice of leisure activities (e.g., squash versus bowling), food preferences (e.g., tofu and beans versus steak and potatoes), cars, and home decorating choices. When researchers show people pictures of someone's living room, for example, study participants make surprisingly accurate guesses about the occupant's personality.[57] In the same way that a consumer's use of products influences others' perceptions, the same products can help to determine his or her own self-concept and social identity.[58]

We are *attached* to an object to the extent we rely on it to maintain our self-concept.[59] Objects act as a security blanket when they reinforce our identities, especially in unfamiliar situations. For example, students who decorate their dorm rooms with personal items are less likely to drop out of college. This coping process may protect the self from being diluted in a strange environment.[60] When a pair of researchers asked children of various ages to create "who am I?" collages, for which they chose pictures that represented their selves, older kids between middle childhood and early adolescence inserted more photos of branded merchandise. Also, as they aged, their feelings about these objects evolved from concrete relationships (e.g., "I own it") to more sophisticated, abstract relationships (e.g., "It is like me").[61]

Our use of consumption information to define the self is especially important when we have yet to completely form a social identity, such as when we have to play a new role in life. Think, for example, of the insecurity many of us felt when we first started college or reentered the dating market after leaving a long-term relationship. **Symbolic self-completion theory** suggests that people who have an incomplete self-definition tend to complete this identity when they acquire and display symbols they associate with that role.[62]

Adolescent boys, for example, may use "macho" products such as cars and cigarettes to bolster developing masculinity; these items act as a "social crutch" during a period of uncertainty about their new identity as adult males. As we mature into a role, we actually rely less on the products people associate with it: When kids start to skateboard, they often invest in pro skateboard "decks" with graphics and branding that cost between $40 and $70 even without the "trucks" (wheels and axles). But—to the chagrin of the skateboard industry—as they get more serious about boarding, many think it's just fine to buy *blank decks*, the plain wood boards that cost only $15 to $30.[63]

The contribution of possessions to self-identity is perhaps most apparent when we lose these treasured objects. One of the first acts of institutions that want to repress individuality and encourage group identity, such as prisons or the military, is to confiscate personal possessions.[64] Victims of burglaries and natural disasters commonly report feelings of alienation, depression, or of being "violated." One consumer's comment after she was robbed is typical: "It's the next worse thing to being bereaved; it's like being raped."[65] Burglary victims exhibit a diminished sense of community, lowered feelings of privacy, and less pride in their houses' appearance than do their neighbors.[66]

A study of post-disaster conditions, in which consumers may have lost literally everything but the clothes on their backs following a fire, hurricane, flood, or earthquake, highlights the dramatic impact of product loss. Some people are reluctant to undergo the process of re-creating their identities by acquiring new possessions. Interviews with disaster victims reveal that some hesitate to invest the self in new possessions and so become more detached about what they buy. This comment from a woman in her 50s is representative of this attitude: "I had so much love tied up in my things. I can't go through that kind of loss again. What I'm buying now won't be as important to me."[67]

The Extended Self

As we noted previously, many of the props and settings consumers use to define their social roles become parts of their selves. Those external objects that we consider a part of us constitute the **extended self**. In some cultures, people literally incorporate objects into the self: they lick new possessions, take the names of conquered enemies (or in some cases eat them), or bury the dead with their possessions.[68] Perhaps we do something similar when we create our Bitmojis, avatars, or other **digital selves** that represent us in the online world. Indeed, some fashion designers including Michael Kors, Zac Posen Alexander McQueen, Calvin Klein, and Diane von Furstenberg already are creating collections for Bitmoji. Women can buy a "real" dress and get the same one for their digital self.[69]

Consumers continue to discover new ways to integrate manufactured products into our physical bodies. The use of foreign materials to replace or supplement human body parts is not necessarily new (remember George Washington's infamous wooden

teeth), but recent advances in technology continue to erode the barrier between self and not self. Here are some examples:[70]

- According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, Americans get more than 9 million cosmetic surgical and nonsurgical procedures in a year. The most frequently performed surgical procedure is breast augmentation, which typically involves the integration of silicon or saline implants with the patient's organic material.
- More than 4 million Americans have an artificial knee.
- At least prior to his recent arrest for murder that made global headlines, the South African track star Oscar Pistorious competed against world-class runners with two artificial legs made of carbon. Nike teamed with orthopedics company Össur to introduce its first sprinting prosthesis, called the Nike Sole, perhaps the first commercially scalable transformation of disabled athletes into "superabled" athletes.
- More than 200,000 people now have cochlear implants that deliver sound from a microphone directly to the auditory nerve. Other neural implants recognize when epileptic seizures are about to occur and stimulate the brain to stop them. A woman paralyzed from the waist down who wore a motorized exoskeleton walked the route of the London Marathon over a period of 17 days.

We don't usually go that far, but some people do cherish possessions as if they were a part of them. In fact, some of us willingly (and perhaps eagerly) label ourselves as *fanatics* about a cherished product.[71] Consider shoes, for example: You don't have to be Carrie of *Sex and the City* fame to acknowledge that many people feel a strong bond to their footwear. The singer Mariah Carey posted a photo of her huge shoe closet on Instagram and labeled it, "Always my favorite room in the house . . . #shoes #shoes #moreshoes."[72]

One study found that people commonly view their shoes as magical emblems of self, Cinderella-like vehicles for self-transformation. Based on data collected from consumers, the researcher concluded that (like their sister Carrie) women tend to be more attuned to the symbolic implications of shoes than men. A common theme that emerged was that a pair of shoes obtained when younger—whether a first pair of leather shoes, a first pair of high heels, or a first pair of cowboy boots—had a big impact even later in life. These experiences were similar to those that occur in such well-known fairy tales and stories as Dorothy's red shoes in *The Wizard of Oz*, Karen's magical red shoes in Hans Christian Anderson's *The Red Shoes*, and Cinderella's glass slippers.[73]

In addition to shoes, of course, many material objects—ranging from personal possessions and pets to national monuments or landmarks—help to form a consumer's identity. Just about everyone can name a valued possession that has a lot of the self "wrapped up" in it, whether it is a beloved photograph, a trophy, an old shirt, a car, or a cat. Indeed, usually we can construct a pretty accurate "biography" of someone when we simply catalog the items he or she displays in his bedroom or office. A study illustrates that the product/self doesn't even have to be that strong to influence a consumer's self-concept. In one experiment, researchers approached women in a shopping mall and gave them one of two shopping bags to walk around with for an hour. Women who received a bag from Victoria's Secret later reported to the researchers that they felt more sensual and glamorous. In another experiment, MBA students were asked to take notes for six weeks using

a pen embossed with the MIT logo; they reported feeling smarter at the end of the term.[74]

As Figure 6.1 shows, we describe four levels of the extended self, ranging from personal objects to places and things that allow people to feel as though they are rooted in their larger social environments:[75]

1. **Individual level**—Consumers include many of their personal possessions in self-definition. These products can include jewelry, cars, clothing, and so on. The saying "You are what you wear" reflects the belief that one's things are a part of one's identity.
2. **Family level**—This part of the extended self includes a consumer's residence and the furnishings in it. We can think of the house as a symbolic body for the family, and the place where we live often is a central aspect of who we are.
3. **Community level**—It is common for consumers to describe themselves in terms of the neighborhood or town from which they come. For farm families or other residents with close ties to a community, this sense of belonging is particularly important.
4. **Group level**—We regard our attachments to certain social groups as a part of the self; we'll consider some of these consumer *subcultures* in later chapters. A consumer also may feel that landmarks, monuments, or sports teams are a part of the extended self.

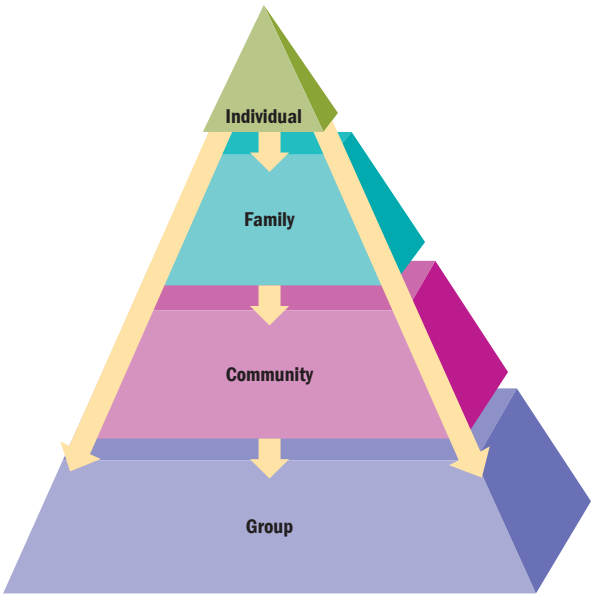


Figure 6.1 LEVELS OF THE EXTENDED SELF

Embodied Cognition

To what extent do the products we buy influence how we define ourselves? Social scientists who study relationships between thoughts and behaviors increasingly talk about the theory of **embodied cognition**. A simple way to explain this perspective is that "states of the body modify states of the mind."[76] In other words, our behaviors and observations of what we do and buy shape our thoughts rather than vice versa. One of the most powerful examples is the idea that our body language actually changes how we see ourselves; in the most widely viewed TED talk ever, a social psychologist discusses how **power posing** (standing in a confident way even if you don't feel confident) affects brain activity. The self-fulfilling prophecy is again at work.[77]

The embodied cognition approach is consistent with consumer behavior research that demonstrates how changes in self-concept can arise from usage of brands that convey different meanings. For example, findings from a recent study may help you to improve your golf game by taking advantage of the placebo effect we discussed in Chapter 5. All of the subjects used the same putter, but in one experimental condition they were led to believe that it was specifically made to enhance performance. These golfers actually did better—though they took credit for their performance rather than "thanking" the putter! The researchers concluded that superior scores resulted because using a brand the subjects thought would give them an edge lowered their anxiety about doing well on the task and raised their self-esteem regarding their golf game.[78] The self-fulfilling prophecy at work!

The Tangled Web

"I can leave Facebook whenever I want!" Actually, for many people it's not so easy. Researchers looked at Facebook posts, blogs, discussion groups, and online magazines to find "breakup stories" that would help them to understand what people go through when they decide to end their relationship with this social network. Many people talked about the things they're missing: friends' birthdays, the ability to play online games, and the ability to use various online services. Their descriptions were laced with strong emotions that ranged from sadness to the kind of relief an addict might feel if he or she succeeds in breaking out of a bad habit. Here are a few excerpts from the study:[81]

- "Deleting my Facebook account was a four-day affair. It took me that long to disentangle myself from the service and to let others know how else they could find me. 'Disentangling' entailed deleting my photos, 'unliking' everything, and disconnecting all of the third-party services that used Facebook Connect to log me in."
- "I found a tiny link at the bottom of the security settings page for 'how to deactivate Facebook.' After clicking the link, a page popped up with photos of me and my friends. 'Jake will miss you,' one caption read. 'Jules will miss you,' 'Aaron will miss you.' All of my friends were smiling at me and telling me to please don't go."
- "I reactivated my Facebook account. Rejecting it felt, well, extreme. You can't get away from it. It's everything. It's everywhere. We can't reject it entirely. But I am approaching it this time with new wariness."

(continued)

In a related vein, is it true that "you are what you wear?" One pair of researchers used the term **enclothed cognition** in their work that showed how the symbolic meaning of clothing changes how people behave. In one study they asked respondents to wear a lab coat, which people associate with attentiveness and precise work. Indeed they found that subjects who wore the lab coat displayed enhanced performance on tasks that required them to pay close attention. But they also introduced a twist: When respondents were told the garment was in fact a painter's coat rather than a doctor's lab coat, the effects went away. In other words, the respondents interpreted the symbolic meaning of the clothing and then altered their behavior accordingly.[79]

It's tempting to point out that a study your humble author conducted more than 30 years ago on the "dress for success" phenomenon found similar results for students in job interview settings. In perhaps the best Ph.D. dissertation ever written (at least in your author's opinion), male candidates who wore professional attire acted more assertively and confidently during the interviews, and on average even asked for higher starting salaries![80]

Wearable Computing

Get ready for the invasion of **wearable computing**. Whether devices we wear on our wrist like the Apple Watch, or woven into our clothing, increasingly our digital interactions will become attached to our bodies—and perhaps even inserted *into* our bodies as companies offer ways to implant computer chips into our wrists.

A small Wisconsin company made headlines when it gave employees the option to implant a microchip in their arms that allows them to log on to their computers, throw away their corporate badges, and even make purchases from vending machines in the building. Although this was largely a publicity stunt (that worked quite well!), some analysts believe the day when many of us will be **chipped** may not be that far off. After all, pet owners have been chipping their dogs for years to insure that they don't get lost—why not do the same to ourselves?

This idea is not new—way back in 2004 a Spanish nightclub offered VIP members the option to receive a tiny RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) chip in their arms instead of a standard card. The chip functioned as an in-house debit card. A decade later, a school district in Texas adapted similar RFID technology that's used to track the movements of cattle in order to monitor students' attendance and where they are on campus when it included a small chip on their ID cards.

A tiny implantable device can potentially simplify many daily activities: Imagine not having to carry a passport, a driver's license, or credit cards. A swipe of the arm would start your car, pass you through airport security, and regulate the heat in your home.[82] Of course, using a fake ID to get into bars might be a bit trickier . . .

As the Internet of Things connects us to more of our devices, some people are pushing the envelope as they explore new ways to integrate their bodies with technology. These **biohackers** come in all shapes and sizes. Some wear a headband that electrically stimulates the brain to improve cognition. Some meticulously track and record everything they eat, and dabble in supplements that purport to improve mental and physical performance. A few hardy souls even have a light-up implant surgically inserted into their arms to monitor biometric data that changes color when levels are abnormal.



Saudi Arabia is the first country to grant citizenship to a robot (named Sophia).
Source: Anton Gvozdikov/Shutterstock.

They share a belief that individuals have the power to harness biotechnology in the service of enhanced mental and physical well-being. Simply put, these "enthusiasts" aim to build an improved human being.

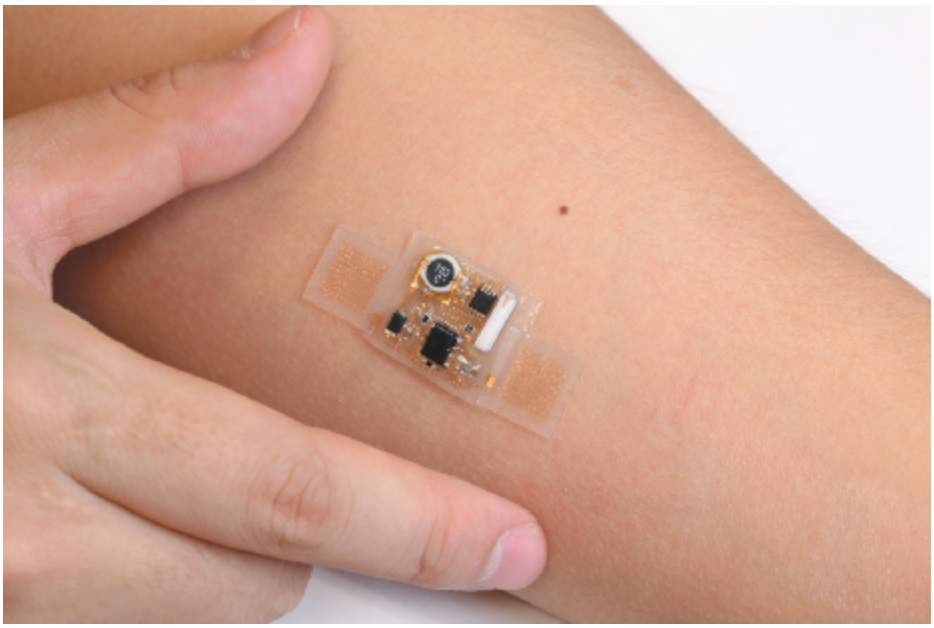
The line that divides humans from machines is starting to blur. Self-driving cars threaten to replace truck drivers. IBM's Watson beats chess masters and veteran *Jeopardy* game show contestants. Movies and TV shows like *Blade Runner*, *Westworld*, and *Humans* that focus on the civil rights of synths, replicants, and androids are center stage in popular culture. Alexa and Siri are our new guardian angels. Where does the person stop and the machine start?

The fusion between the physical body and technology leads some analysts to compare the modern consumer to a **cyborg**.[83] For sci-fi buffs, this term evokes the Cylons in the TV series *Battlestar Galactica.* More generally it refers to a person who lives a technologically enhanced existence, and who often possesses special abilities because she or he is linked to other parts of a larger system (like the internet, perhaps).[84] Followers of The **Singularity movement** believe that we are headed toward a new era, where human intelligence will merge with computer intelligence to create a human/machine hybrid civilization. They predict that the wall separating humans and computers will fall, perhaps even in our lifetimes.

We're far from there now, but it's hard to ignore the steady advance of work on the *Internet of Things* (IoT). It looks like the IoT will be a tidal wave that will soon wash over many industry verticals. Current examples include a person with a heart monitor implant, a farm animal with a biochip transponder, a smart thermostat that adjusts the temperature in a home and even raises and lowers the blinds to maintain equilibrium, or an automobile that has built-in sensors to alert the driver when tire pressure is low.[85]

There are obvious privacy concerns as connected products pick up steam, but advocates argue they offer numerous benefits as well. These attachable computers will be cheaper, provide greater accuracy because sensors are closer to our

- "[M]y decision to jettison Facebook has drawn me closer to those that matter and allowed peripheral acquaintances to fade away naturally. I can no longer just toss a meaningless 'Happy Birthday, ugly!' on my friends' Facebook walls, but instead must call them to express such sentiments."
- "I have toyed with the idea of logging back in, but prying Facebook's sticky tentacles out of my life has inexorably improved my life, and I urge you to give it a shot, if only for a week."



Scientists continue to develop new ways for people to easily wear computer chips.
Source: Courtesy of John A. Rogers, The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

bodies, and be more convenient because we won't have to carry around additional hardware.[86] Already numerous wearables with big health implications are available or under development:[87]

- Sensing for sleep disorders by tracking breath, heart rate, and motion
- Detecting possible onset of Alzheimer's by monitoring a person's gait via a GPS embedded in his or her shoes
- Tracking ingestion of medication via sensors that are activated by stomach fluid
- Measuring blood sugar via a contact lens with a chip that can track activity in a patient's tears
- Measuring whether the wearer is sweating, along with the strength of the odor and odor type via a Japanese device that connects to an app on a smartphone through Bluetooth. He or she gets notified if it's time to change that shirt.[88]

And finally, how about a smart condom? The i.Con is fitted with a nano-chip that tracks movement and calories burned. Users can opt to share performance information data online. No, you can't make this stuff up.[89]

OBJECTIVE 6-2
Gender identity is an important component of a consumer's self-concept.

Gender Identity

Although Cinderella, Ariel, and other princesses still offer a tried-and-true formula for girls that involves being "rescued" by a man, other heroines teach a different lesson. Katniss from *The Hunger Games*, the Black Widow of *The Avengers*, Anna and Elsa of *Frozen*, Tris from *Divergent* and Wonder Woman compete for girls' loyalty. The appeal of Katniss explains why Hasbro has done so well with the Nerf Rebelle Heartbreaker Exclusive Golden Edge Bow, a petunia-colored weapon with gold and white trim that shoots colorful foam darts. A similar product line, Zing's Air Huntress bows and sling shots, carries the slogan: "Ready. Aim. Girl Power." There's even a Barbie version of a Katniss doll complete with bow and arrow.[90]

Gender identity is an important component of a consumer's self-concept. People often conform to their culture's expectations about how those of their gender should act, dress, or speak; we refer to these sets of expectations as **sex roles**. Of course, these guidelines change over time, and they differ radically across societies. Recently an Italian man filed a complaint about his wife with the police, leading the 40-year-old woman to face the formal charge of "mistreatment of the family." He accused his wife of "bad management of domestic affairs" after two years of neglect, including an unwillingness to cook and clean.[91] American husbands: do not try this at home!

It's not clear to what extent gender differences are innate rather than culturally shaped, but they're certainly evident in many consumption situations. Consider the gender differences market researchers observe when they compare the food preferences of men to those of women. Women eat more fruit; men are more likely to eat meat. As one food writer put it, "Boy food doesn't grow. It is hunted or killed."[92] Indeed, consumers do tend to view meat as a masculine product. In one case a company that sells soy patties found that men viewed the food as feminine, so its solution was to add artificial grill marks on the patties to make them look like cuts of meat.[93]

The sexes also differ sharply in the quantities of food they eat: When researchers at Hershey discovered that women eat smaller amounts of candy, they created a white chocolate confection called Hugs, one of the most successful food introductions of all time. In contrast, a man in a Burger King Whopper ad ditches his date at a fancy restaurant, complaining that he is "too hungry to settle for chick food." Pumped up on Whoppers, a swelling mob of men shake their fists, punch one another and toss a van off a bridge.[94]

Sex Role Socialization

When students write reviews of faculty members on the popular website *Rate My Professors*, they use different words depending on whether the professor is male or female. Women professors usually come out on the losing end of these reviews. In a study that examined 14 million reviews on the site, positive words such as *smart* and *genius* are more much more likely to describe males than females across 25 different disciplines. Other terms that fit female stereotypes pop up in reviews of female professors, including *bossy*, *strict*, and *demanding* (as well as *nurturing*). Women are also much more likely to be called out by the fashion police with terms such as *frumpy*.[95]

Children pick up on the concept of gender identity at an earlier age than researchers previously believed—by as young as age one in some cases. By the age of three, most U.S. children categorize driving a truck as masculine and cooking and cleaning as feminine.[96] Even characters that cartoons portray as helpless are more likely to wear frilly or ruffled dresses.[97] Many commercial sources, such as Cinderella or Katniss dolls, provide lessons in **gender socialization** for both girls and boys.

Marketers tend to reinforce cultural expectations regarding the "correct" way for boys and girls, men and women, to look and act. Many societies expect males to pursue **agentic goals**, which stress self-assertion and mastery. However, they teach females to value **communal goals**, such as affiliation and building harmonious relations.[98] A recent comprehensive review of the research literature reported five basic conclusions about gender differences:[99]

1. Males are more self-oriented, whereas females are more other-oriented
2. Females are more cautious responders

3 Females are more responsive to negative data
4 Males process data more selectively and females more comprehensively; and
5 Females are more sensitive to differentiating conditions and factors.

Gender Identity versus Sexual Identity

Gender-role identity is a state of mind as well as body. A person's biological gender (i.e., male or female) does not totally determine whether he or she will exhibit **sex-typed traits**—characteristics we stereotypically associate with one gender or the other. A consumer's subjective feelings about his or her sexuality are crucial as well.[100]

At the same time, new evidence is emerging about the effects of biology on consumer behavior. **Neuroendocrinological science** focuses on the potential role of hormonal influences on preferences for different kinds of products or people.[101] Much of this work is based on evolutionary logic that underscores how people are "wired" from birth to seek out mates who can produce optimal offspring that will be more likely to survive in a competitive environment. For example, evidence suggests that women who are at peak fertility (near ovulation in their monthly menstrual cycle) are attracted to men who display evidence of higher levels of testosterone (male hormone), and these women are also more interested in attending social gatherings (presumably to increase their chances of locating a suitable mate). One set of experiments showed that at peak fertility women (nonconsciously) chose products that enhanced their appearance by wearing sexy rather than conservative clothing. The researchers claim this is because of a desire to attract men's attention away from attractive rivals. Another set of studies found that ovulating women are more likely to prefer variety in product choice; the authors report that this variety seeking relates to a desire to be exposed to new men during this time.[102]

Unlike maleness and femaleness, masculinity and femininity are *not* biological characteristics. A behavior that one culture considers to be masculine might get a different response in another. For example, the norm in the United States is that male friends avoid touching each other (except in "safe" situations such as on the football field). In some Latin and European cultures, however, it is common for men to hug and kiss one another as a form of greeting. Note that even this norm continues to evolve, as U.S. teenagers of both sexes adopt the new fad of hugging as a standard form of greeting (sometimes accompanied by the high-five or the fist-bump) and male friends (encouraged by the MTV show of the same name) feel free to talk about having a **bromance** (affection between straight male friends).[103]

Sex-Typed Products

Obviously many products are intimately associated with one gender or the other, especially if they link to a culture's definition of what is sexually appealing. Thus, the results of a recent French study shouldn't be too surprising: In a series of field experiments, men were more likely to complete a survey or pick up a dropped glove if a female confederate wore high heels rather than flats. The higher the heel, the greater the likelihood of cooperation. As you might guess, the relationship did not hold for females.[104] Note: Gender-specific linkages like this may indeed have a biological basis. Some (though hardly all) social scientists speculate that high heels change a woman's posture in a way that men are "wired" to notice. As one account puts it, "The waist looks slimmer, the backside protrudes, the chest thrusts out, and a pedestrian gait becomes what anthropologists call 'the courtship strut.'"[105]

A popular book once proclaimed, *Real Men Don't Eat Quiche*. In addition to quiche, marketers promote many **sex-typed products**. They reflect stereotypical masculine or feminine attributes, and consumers associate them with one gender or

another.[106] In a rush to jump on the #MeToo bandwagon, liquor manufacturer Johnny Walker introduced a female version of its familiar logo called Jane Walker.[107] Restaurant chains that attract diners with buxom servers in short shorts have become so popular the industry has a name for this category: *breastaurants.* The largest eatery of this kind is Hooters, which boasts more than $1 billion in sales annually. Other category members include Twin Peaks, Mugs N Jugs, and Tilted Kilt.[108] On the other hand, Target decided to phase out men/women and boy/girl references in certain shopping areas. The retail chain announced that in sections like entertainment, kids' bedding, and toys, customers will stop seeing gender-specific labels or pinks, blues, yellows, or greens used to imply a product is only for one gender.[109]

Female Sex Roles

In the 1949 movie *Adam's Rib*, Katharine Hepburn played a stylish and competent lawyer. This film was one of the first to show that a woman can have a successful career and still be happily married. Today, the evolution of a new managerial class of women has forced marketers to change their traditional assumptions about women as they target this growing market.

Still, it's premature to proclaim the death of traditional sex-role stereotypes. This is certainly true in Islamic countries that require women to be completely covered in



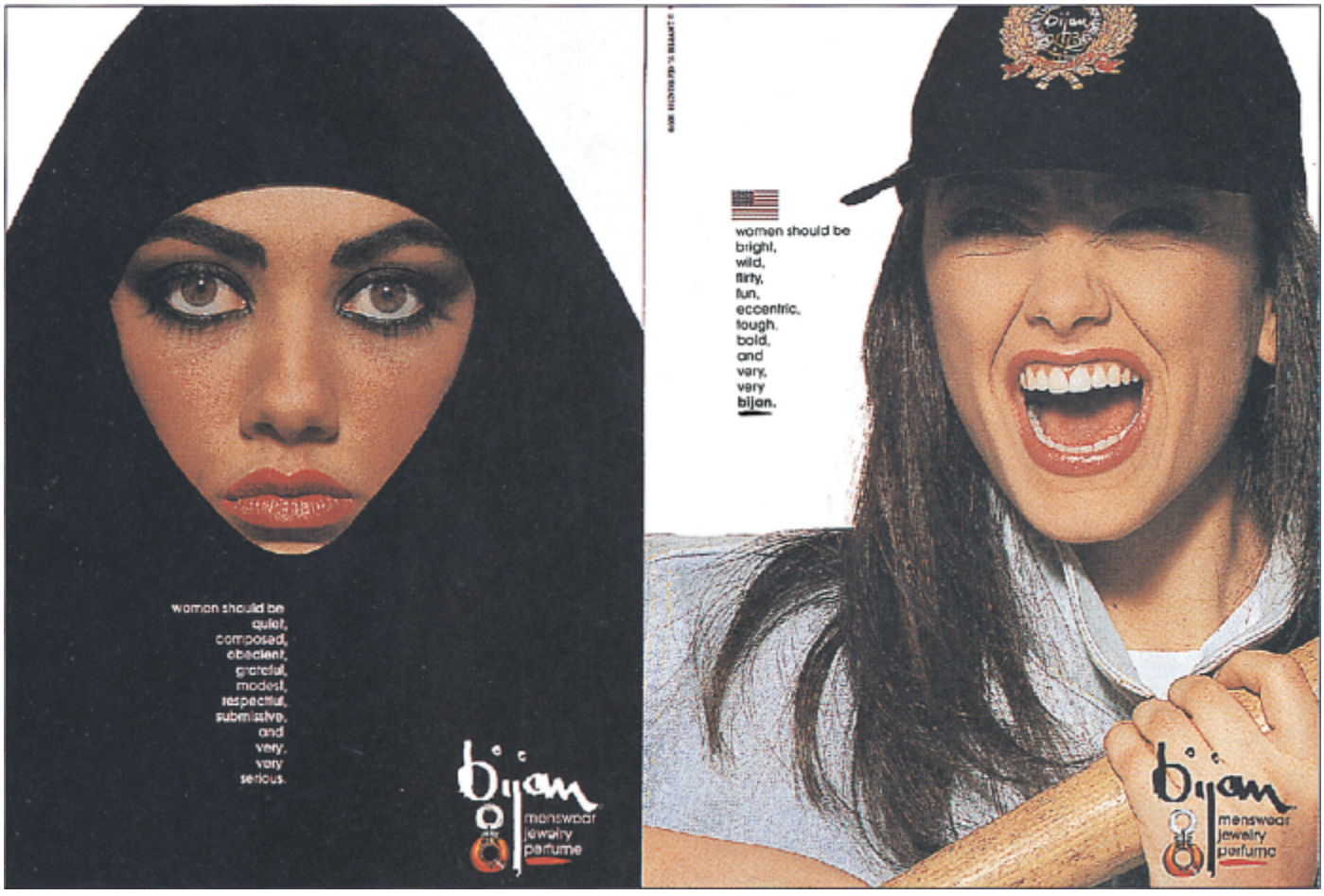
During World War II, the U.S. Government invented a character it named Rosie the Riveter to inspire women to contribute to the war effort by working in factories. The *New Yorker* recently ran an updated version to reflect today's cultural environment. *Source:* Abigail Gray Swartz/The New Yorker © Conde Nast.



Many products acquire a gender identity.
Source: Courtesy of Greatest Common Factory and SafeAuto Bill Sallans.

public and that prohibit them from working as salespeople in stores open to the public (even if the store sells female intimate apparel).[110]

To further complicate matters, sex roles constantly evolve. In a complex society like ours, we often encounter contradictory messages about "appropriate" behavior, and we may find ourselves putting on a different face as we jump from situation to situation. An exploration of what the authors labeled **contemporary young mainstream female achievers (CYMFA)** identified different roles these women play



This ad for Bijan illustrates how sex role identities are culturally bound by contrasting the expectations of how women should appear in two different countries.
Source: Courtesy of Bijan Fragrances c/o Fashion World.

in different contexts. For example, as a mother or partner they enact a highly feminine role; as a tough, pitiless businessperson, they play a masculine role; and with a friend they might evoke both roles at once.[111]

There is no shortage of expert advice on marketing to women. Here are a few important dos and don'ts:

- DO rely heavily upon social media when marketing to women. Women are more likely than men to adopt technologies that enable customer engagement. For example, more women than men use QR codes, Facebook, and Pinterest. They rely on these platforms to help others make smart decisions. One recent study found that 92 percent of women pass along information to others about deals and 76 percent want to be part of a special panel or group. Women ask more questions and gather more information than their male counterparts and collaborate more than men before arriving at decisions. Women also self-disclose more than men and willingly share stories of successes and failures, including good and bad brand experiences. This means that it's a good strategy to give them incentives to act as brand advocates on your behalf.
- DO rely on emotional messaging. Women are likely to form more of a lasting emotional attachment to products. Instead of presenting a lot of dry stats, show them why they need the product and make their lives better.
- DON'T "gender wash"—avoid stereotypes and don't assume that all women are the same.
- DON'T fall into the "shrink it and pink it" mentality. According to one analyst, "When organizations finally realize the importance of women customers, the first tendency can be to make things smaller, pink, and sparkly to signal that the product is feminine." This "cutesy" assumption is a turnoff to many women.[112]

Male Sex Roles

To promote the Dr. Pepper Ten drink, the company sent a mobile "Man Cave" to U.S. cities. The trailer parked in "testosterone zones" such as ball fields or car shows, where it gave men a place to watch TV and play video games. The accompanying advertising campaign featured a muscled commando type who totes a space-age weapon. "Hey ladies, enjoying the film?" he asks. "'Course not. Because this is our movie, and Dr. Pepper Ten is our soda."[113]

Our culture's stereotype of the ideal male is a tough, aggressive, muscular man who enjoys "manly" sports. When global entrepreneur and CEO of Virgin Airlines Richard Branson lost a racing bet to the owner of Air Asia, his "sentence" was to dress as a female flight attendant for the winner's airline. The winner gloated, "I'm looking forward to him sucking up to me as a stewardess!"[114] A study that tracked advertising in eight male magazines with primarily male readerships (ranging from *Maxim* to *Golf Digest*) reported that most contain many ads that can contribute to "hyper-masculinity" because of heavy emphasis on violence, dangerousness, and callous attitudes toward women and sex.[115] Another study that tried to answer the question of why women are more likely to embrace sustainable behaviors than men found that men associate green behavior with femininity, so going green threatens their masculinity.[116]

Just as for women, however, the true story is more complicated than being "a man's man." Indeed, scholars of **masculinism** study the male image and the complex cultural meanings of masculinity.[117] Like women, men receive mixed messages about how they are supposed to behave and feel. Chevrolet's "Guy's Night Out" commercial depicts a new dad's night out with friends where they wind up watching his toddler's sing-a-long CD.

One study examined how U.S. men pursue masculine identities through their everyday consumption. The researchers suggest that men try to make sense out of three different models of masculinity that they call *breadwinner*, *rebel*, and *man-of-action*



A male sex-typed product.
Source: With permission from IWC Schaffhausen.

hero. On the one hand, the breadwinner model draws from the U.S. myth of success and celebrates respectability, civic virtues, pursuit of material success, and organized achievement. The rebel model, on the other hand, emphasizes rebellion, independence, adventure, and potency. The man-of-action hero is a synthesis that draws from the best of the other two models.[118]

Models of behavior for men are very much in flux now, especially since a tidal wave of sexual harassment scandals ended the careers of prominent male business executives, politicians, and artists. *Time* magazine's "Person of the Year" for 2017 was "The Silence Breakers": women who came forward as part of the #MeToo Twitter movement to accuse powerful men of abuse. This movement has sparked a national conversation about how men are taught to think about women. In particular, successful companies led by brash young males, such as Uber and the Vice network, sparked criticisms of the so-called **bro culture**. For many, this term implies that the worst aspects of stereotypical fraternity life make their way into corporate culture: hard partying, motivating employees with public humiliation, and treating women as sexual playthings.[119] We're still feeling the repercussions from these revelations, and it remains to be seen how this issue will impact the way marketers depict men and women down the road.

Androgyny

The Chinese music group Acrush (which stands for "Adonis crush") competes with the many homegrown "boy bands" that vie for the devotion of young music fans. But there is a difference: This group consists of five "handsome girls" who specifically appeal to the growing number of androgynous urban trendsetters who reject traditional gender norms.[120]

Androgyny refers to the possession of both masculine and feminine traits.[121] Researchers make a distinction between *sex-typed people*, who are stereotypically masculine or feminine, and *androgynous* people, whose orientation isn't as clearly defined. Clearly, the "normality" of sex-typed behaviors varies across cultures. For example, although acceptance of homosexuality varies in Asian cultures, it doesn't occur to most Asians to assume that a man with some feminine qualities is gay. A survey of Korean consumers found that more than 66 percent of men and 57 percent of women younger than age 40 live self-described "androgynous" lifestyles—with men having more traditionally female traits and women having more traditionally male ones than they might have years ago. But the respondents didn't link that with sexual orientation. Although Koreans nickname males with feminine interests "flower men," they don't consider this to be a derogatory term.[122] In Japan, men whom people call *gyaru-o* ("male gals") are common on city streets. Tanned and meticulously dressed (and usually heterosexual), these fops cruise Tokyo's stylish boutiques.[123]

In the U.S., many young consumers also seem to display a more fluid approach to gender. About eight in 10 say that gender doesn't define a person as it used to, and half say they know someone who uses gender-neutral pronouns. These new consumers tend to reject strict male/female categories when they shop—less than half say they always buy clothes designed for their own gender. Indeed the color known as "Millennial Pink" (also "Scandi Pink") has become a symbol of a more gender-neutral lifestyle; it shows on clothes, rugs, Drake's album colors, Apple's rose-gold iPhones, and even singer/songwriter Zayn Malik's hair.[124] Startup companies like Older Brother sell



The singer Zayn Malik (formerly in New Direction) sports "Millennial Pink."
Source: Jamie McCarthy/Getty Images Entertainment/Getty Images.

unisex clothing, and MeUndies makes underwear for men and women including bright pink men's boxers and camo-print women's bikinis.[125]

Some research indicates that sex-typed people are more sensitive to the sex role depictions of characters in advertising. In one study, subjects read two versions of a beer advertisement couched in either masculine or feminine terms. The masculine version contained phrases such as "X beer has the strong aggressive flavor that really asserts itself with good food and good company," and the feminine version made claims such as "Brewed with tender care, X beer is a full-bodied beer that goes down smooth and gentle." People who rated themselves as highly masculine or highly feminine preferred the version that was described in (respectively) very masculine or very feminine terms.[126]

Researchers developed a scale to identify "nontraditional males" (NTMs) who exhibit stereotypically female tendencies. The scale included statements such as these:

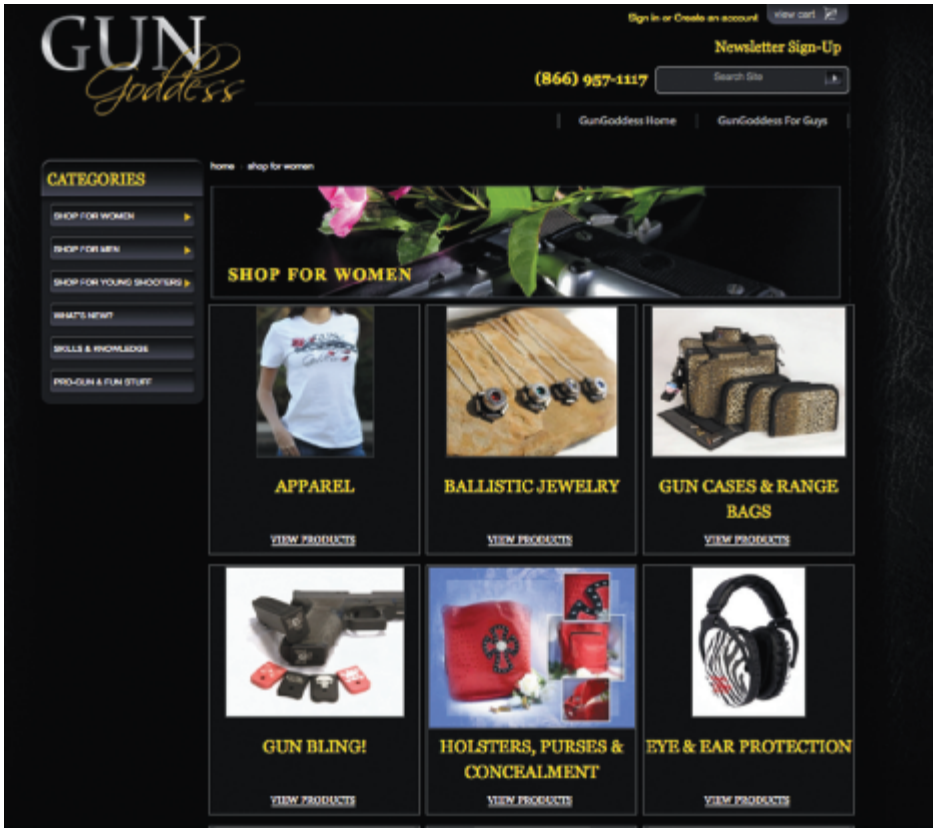
- I enjoy looking through fashion magazines.
- In our family, I take care of the checkbook and pay the bills.
- I am concerned about getting enough calcium in my diet.
- I am good at fixing mechanical things.
- I would do better than average in a fistfight.



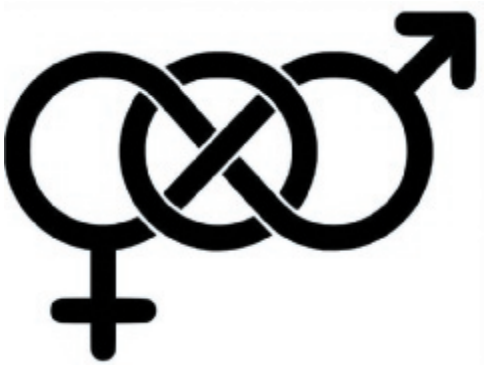
Androgyny refers to the possession of both masculine and feminine traits.
Source: kitty/Shutterstock.

Androgyny can open new markets if marketers expand the reach of their target audience. Some companies that sell exclusively to one gender may therefore decide to test the waters with the other sex when they promote **gender-bending products**, which are traditionally sex-typed items adapted to the opposite gender, such as the recent profusion of merchants like Kahr, Walther and Taurus that sell pink guns for women. Here are some other gender benders:[127]

- Although makeup for men isn't a new trend in the U.S. (yet), over 3 million British males regularly wear cosmetics products like "manscara" and "guyliner"—and only 2 percent of 18- to 24- year-old men define themselves as totally masculine. Manny Gutierrez, Maybelline's first male brand ambassador, helped to encourage this practice. A store in London called A Wanted Man offers a brow bar, while Quiff and Co. sells wigs and hairpieces. The online retailer MMUK Man opened its first bricks-and-mortar store in 2018 to sell a male clientele concealers, mascaras, and other products.[128]
- Old Spice has long been known as the brand Dad keeps in his medicine cabinet, but young women who like the scent and the relatively low price are tuning into the deodorant as well. This resurgence is a bit ironic because the first product the company introduced in 1937 was a women's fragrance.
- Febreze is an odor-neutralizing line of products that Procter & Gamble (P&G) markets to women for housecleaning. However, P&G finds that a lot of men spray it on their clothes to delay doing laundry. And in Vietnam, where the product is called Ambi Pur, men who ride motor scooters use it as a deodorizing spray for their helmets.[129]



Guns have become a gender-bending product. Gun Goddess sells feminine accessories to women who own or use firearms.
Source: Courtesy of GunGoddess.com.



We can expect to see gender-neutral icons like this one popping up on public restrooms and other locations as the third-gender movement picks up steam.
Source: Gender Neutral icon.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Consumers

The proportion of the population that is gay or lesbian is difficult to determine, and efforts to measure this group have been controversial.[130] The proportion of American adults identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) in 2016 was 4.1 percent, or more than 10 million people.[131]

Gay relationships are increasingly mainstream in most parts of the United States. A 2017 survey found that 62 percent of Americans favor same-sex marriage, and this proportion jumps to 74 percent among young adults ages 18 to 36.[132] Therefore, it's not surprising to see more and more marketing communications that routinely include gay couples and themes. A recent Coca-Cola ad entitled "Pool Boy" is typical; A young woman ogles her family's pool cleaner—dressed in open button-up shirt exposing his chest—through a window. Meanwhile her brother is doing the same from his bedroom. Both get the idea to run out and offer the man a Coke. But their mother had the same idea and she beats them to the punch.[133]

Of late the cultural spotlight has turned on transgender people, helped along by the media attention paid to a character in the popular TV show *Orange is the New Black* and the debut of Olympic athlete and current reality TV star, former Bruce Jenner as Caitlyn Jenner on the cover of *Vogue*. United Colors of Benetton broke new ground when its product campaign included Lea T, a trans-sexual Brazilian model.[134] The makeup brand Jecca specifically targets trans women. Its concealer product not only hides blemishes or acne, but also covers a five o'clock shadow.[135]

Our definitions of gender continue to evolve as a global **third-gender movement** picks up steam: California and Oregon allow residents to declare a "third gender" on their drivers' licenses, and Canadians can mark their sex as "unspecified" on passports.[136] The University of California added "gender nonconforming" and "genderqueer" to its applications alongside transgender, male, and female. Even Facebook lets users choose among 58 defined genders—along with a write-in option—that range from "gender fluid" to "intersex" and simply "neither."[137]

Most social scientists have always viewed sexuality as a continuum rather than a dichotomy. Masculinity and femininity are social constructions that vary across cultures and historical periods. However, in Western culture we seem to have reached a watershed moment when people question even the anchor points of this continuum. It seems that **gender binarism** — the classification of gender into two distinct, opposite and disconnected forms of masculine and feminine is giving way to **gender benders**, or people who "bend" traditional sex roles.

OBJECTIVE 6-3
The way we think about our bodies (and the way our culture tells us we should think) is a key component of self-esteem.

The Body as Product

A person's physical appearance is a large part of his or her self-concept. **Body image** refers to a consumer's subjective evaluation of his or her physical self. Our evaluations don't necessarily correspond to what those around us see. A man may think of himself as being more muscular than he really is, or a woman may feel she appears fatter than is actually the case. Whether these perceptions are accurate is almost a moot point because our body insecurities weigh us down whether they're justified or not.[138]



In a series of Dove ads in China, pregnant bellies are painted with questions from unborn girls. "If you knew I would grow to be a flat-nosed girl, will you still welcome me?" asks one. "If you knew I'd grow up to weigh 140 jin [154 lbs.], would I still be your baby?" asks another. The third: "I'll soon come to the world, but if I grow to only have an A bra cup, will you tease me?" Many Chinese women worry about being labeled a "leftover woman" or a "spinster," terms for women who reach the age of 26 and are still single.[139]
Source: Phil Date/Shutterstock.

Some marketers exploit consumers' tendencies to distort their body images when they prey on our insecurities about appearance. They try to create a gap between the real and the ideal physical selves and consequently motivate a person to purchase products and services he or she thinks will narrow that gap. Even social media apparently impacts how we feel about our bodies. A recent study of Facebook users reported that one-half of them felt more self-conscious about their body images after they looked at photos of themselves and others on the site.[140] Another study reported a similar effect in bricks-and-mortar stores: When women walk into a store that has attractive salespeople, they feel less positive about their own appearances. Ironically, this makes them *less* likely to make "embarrassing" purchases such as feminine hygiene or weight-loss products. The effect is even more pronounced when the salesperson is of the opposite sex.[141]

Ideals of Beauty

BeautifulPeople.com is an online dating site that allows only attractive people to join (you have to have your photo approved by members). Now it's expanding its service to employers who want to hire "good-looking staff." One of the site's managers explains, "Attractive people tend to make a better first impression on clients, win more business and earn more."[142] He might be right: One study reported that on average a U.S. worker who was among the bottom one-seventh in looks, as assessed by randomly chosen observers, earned 10 to 15 percent less per year than a similar worker whose looks were assessed in the top one-third—a lifetime difference, in a typical case, of about $230,000.[143] Who says, "Beauty is only skin deep?"

Our satisfaction with the physical image we present to others depends on how closely we think the image corresponds to the ideal our culture values. An **ideal of beauty** is a particular model, or *exemplar*, of appearance. Ideals of beauty for both men and women may include physical features (e.g., a well-rounded derriere for women or a well-defined six-pack for men) as well as clothing styles, cosmetics, hairstyles, skin tone (pale versus tan), and body type (petite, athletic, voluptuous, and so on). Our desires to match up to these ideals—for better or worse—drive a lot of our purchase decisions. What's more, the pressure to exhibit these traits starts earlier and earlier: The retailer Abercrombie & Fitch first came under fire a few years ago for selling thongs to preteens. More recently, critics blasted the chain because it offers padded bikini tops to the same age group.[144]

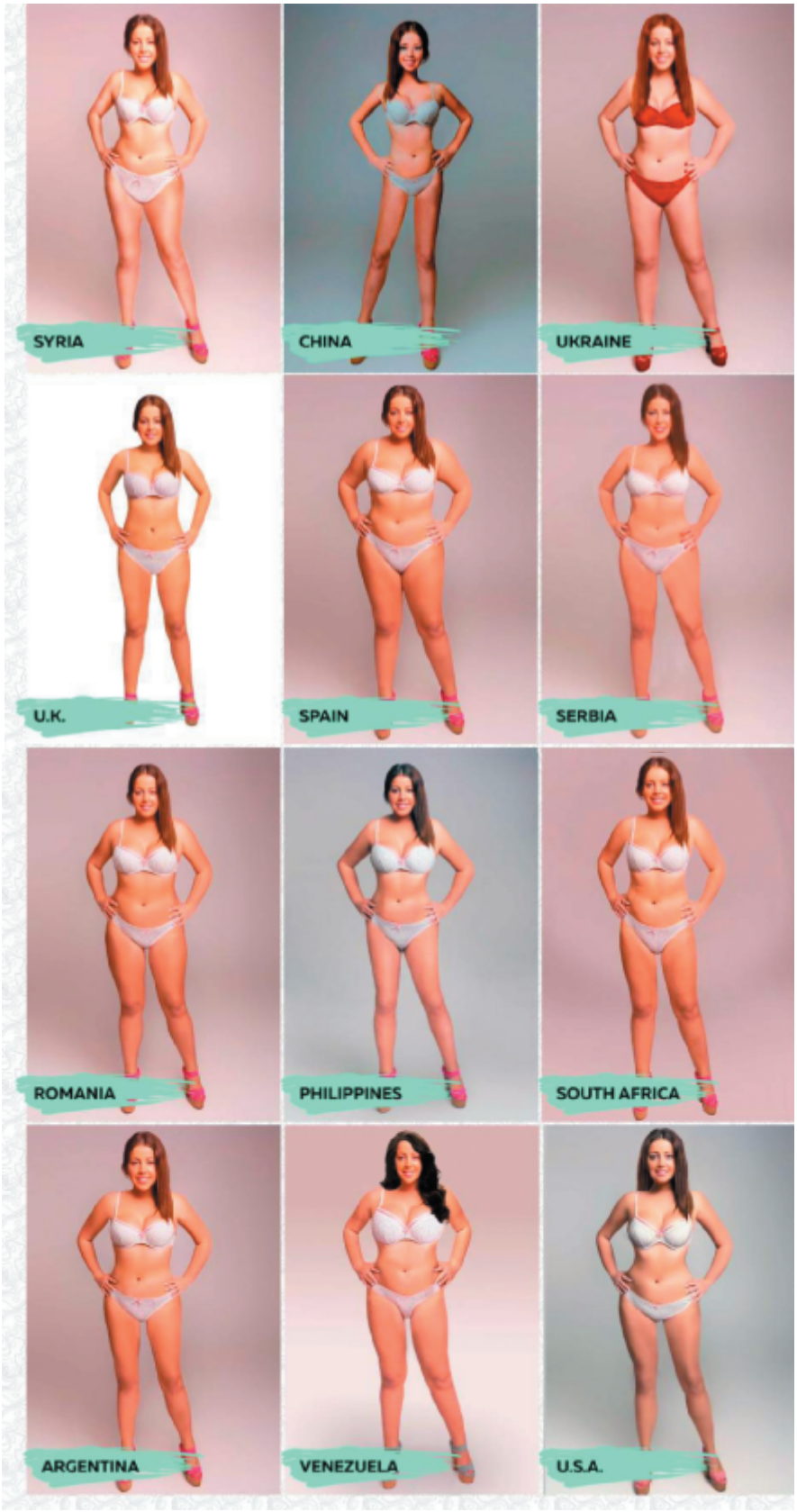
Is Beauty Universal?

As we noted, the evidence continues to mount that at least some of our tastes for physical features are "wired in" genetically. What cues lead us to view some faces as beautiful or handsome as opposed to others? Specifically, people appear to favor features we associate with good health and youth because these signal reproductive ability and strength. These characteristics include large eyes, high cheekbones, and a narrow jaw. Believe it or not, another cue that people across ethnic and racial groups use to signal sexual desirability is whether the person's facial features are balanced (i.e., if the two sides of the face are in proportion to one another). This is a signal of good health. Sure enough, people with symmetrical features on average start having sex three to four years earlier than those with unbalanced features.[145]

Men also use a woman's body shape as a sexual cue; an evolutionary explanation is that feminine curves provide evidence of reproductive potential. During puberty, a typical female gains almost 35 pounds of "reproductive fat" around the hips and thighs that supply the approximately 80,000 extra calories she will need to support a pregnancy. Most fertile women have waist-to-hip ratios of 0.6 to 0.8, an hourglass shape that also happens to be the one men rank highest. Even though preferences for overall weight change over time, waist-to-hip ratios tend to stay in this range. Even the super thin model Twiggy (who pioneered the "waif look" decades before Kate Moss) had a ratio of 0.73.[146]



Female graphic designers from 18 countries were asked to Photoshop a female form by making her, in their opinion, more attractive to other citizens of their country. Some designers in North, South, and Central American countries produced an exaggerated hourglass figure; others in European and Asian nations chose to render her dangerously thin.
Source: Perceptions of Perfection, onlinedoctor.superdrug.com and Hugo Felix/Shutterstock.


SYRIA
CHINA
UKRAINE
U.K.
SPAIN
SERBIA
ROMANIA
PHILIPPINES
SOUTH AFRICA
ARGENTINA
VENEZUELA
U.S.A.

How do women infer that a potential male mate has desirable characteristics of strength and health? They tend to favor men with heavy lower faces (an indication of a high concentration of androgens that impart strength), those who are slightly above average in height, and those with prominent brows. In one study, women viewed a series of male headshots that had been digitally altered to exaggerate or minimize masculine traits. They saw men with square jaws and well-defined brow ridges as good short-term partners, whereas they preferred those with feminine traits, such as rounder faces and fuller lips, for long-term mates. Overwhelmingly, participants said those with more masculine features were likely to be risky and competitive and also more apt to fight, challenge bosses, cheat on spouses, and put less effort into parenting. They assumed that men with more feminine faces would be good parents and husbands, hard workers, and emotionally supportive mates.[147]

These findings also relate to the emerging—and controversial—work in neuroendocrinological science we discussed earlier in the chapter. In another study, researchers showed women in Japan and Scotland a series of computer-generated photos of male faces that were systematically altered in such dimensions as the size of the jaw and the prominence of the eyebrow ridge.[148] Women in the study preferred the heavier



While Americans spend billions of dollars per year to fix less-than-perfect teeth, a new craze among Japanese women is to pay to have straight teeth made crooked. People in the U.S. refer negatively to this look as "snaggleteeth" or "fangs," but many Japanese men find what they call *yaeba* (double tooth) attractive. Blogs celebrate the yaeba look and woman pay dentists to attach pieces of plastic to their real teeth to achieve it.[150]
Source: Philip Bigg/Alamy Stock Photo.

masculine features when they were ovulating, but these choices shifted during other parts of their monthly cycles.

Jaw size aside, the way we "package" our bodies still varies enormously, and that's where marketers come in: Advertising and other forms of mass media play a significant role in determining which forms of beauty we consider desirable at any point in time. An ideal of beauty functions as a sort of cultural yardstick. Consumers compare themselves to some standard (often one the fashion media advocate at that time), and they are dissatisfied with their appearance to the extent that they don't match up to it. This may lower their own self-esteem or, in some cases, possibly diminish the effectiveness of an ad because of negative feelings a highly attractive model arouses.[149]

Our language provides phrases to sum up these cultural ideals. We may talk about a "bimbo," a "girl-next-door," or an "ice queen," or we may refer to specific women who have come to embody an ideal, such as J-Lo, Gwyneth Paltrow, the late Princess Diana, and before her the late Princess Grace.[151] Similar descriptions for men include "jock," "pretty boy," and "bookworm," or a "Brad Pitt type," a "Wesley Snipes type," and so on.

Ideals of Female Beauty Evolve over Time

Although beauty may "only be skin deep," throughout history women have worked hard to attain it. They starved themselves; painfully bound their feet; inserted plates into their lips; spent countless hours under hair dryers, in front of mirrors, and beneath tanning lights; and opted for breast reduction or enlargement operations.

We characterize periods of history by a specific "look," or ideal of beauty. Often these relate to broader cultural happenings, such as today's emphasis on fitness and toned bodies. A look at U.S. history reveals a succession of dominant ideals. For example, in sharp contrast to today's emphasis on health and vigor, in the early 1800s it was fashionable to appear delicate to the point of looking ill. The poet John Keats described the ideal woman of that time as "a milk white lamb that bleats for man's protection." Other past looks include the voluptuous, lusty woman that Lillian Russell made popular; the athletic Gibson Girl of the 1890s; and the small, boyish flapper of the 1920s exemplified by the silent movie actress Clara Bow.[152] Marilyn Monroe died in 1962, but she represents a cultural ideal of beauty that persists to this day. M.A.C. introduced a line of cosmetics named after her and Macy's launched a Marilyn clothing line.[153]

In much of the 19th century, the desirable waistline for U.S. women was 18 inches, a circumference that required the use of corsets pulled so tight that they routinely caused headaches, fainting spells, and possibly even the uterine and spinal disorders common among women of the time. Although modern women are not quite as "straight-laced," many still endure such indignities as high heels, body waxing, eyelifts, and liposuction. In addition to the millions women spend on cosmetics, clothing, health clubs, and fashion magazines, these practices remind us that—rightly or wrongly—the desire to conform to current standards of beauty is alive and well.

Our culture communicates these standards—subtly and not so subtly—virtually everywhere we turn: on magazine covers, in department store windows, on TV shows. Feminists argue that fashion dolls, such as the ubiquitous Barbie, reinforce an unnatural ideal of thinness. When we extrapolate the dimensions of these dolls to average female body sizes, indeed they are unnaturally long and thin.[154] If the traditional Barbie doll were a real woman, her dimensions would be 38–18–34! Mattel conducted "plastic surgery" on Barbie to give her a less pronounced bust and slimmer hips, but she is still not exactly dumpy.[155] The company now sells an even more realistic Barbie featuring wider hips and a smaller bust.[156]

As we've seen, the ideal body type of Western women changes over time—check out portraits of women from several hundred years ago by Botticelli and others to appreciate by just how much. These changes periodically cause us to redefine



A new haircare line called Beauty & Pin-Ups selected a woman with Down Syndrome as the face of its beauty campaign to challenge conventional stereotypes of female beauty.
Source: Rachel Mummey/Barcroft Images/Barcroft Media/Getty Images.

sexual dimorphic markers, which are those aspects of the body that distinguish between the sexes. The first part of the 1990s saw the emergence of the controversial "waif" look in which successful models (most notably Kate Moss) had bodies that resembled those of young boys. Using heights and weights from winners of the Miss America pageant, nutrition experts concluded that many beauty queens were in the undernourished range. In the 1920s, contestants had a body mass index in the range now considered normal (20 to 25). Since then, an increasing number of winners have had indexes under 18.5, which is the World Health Organization's standard for undernutrition.[157]

Similarly, a study of almost 50 years of *Playboy* centerfolds shows that the women have become less shapely since Marilyn Monroe graced the first edition with a voluptuous hourglass figure of 37–23–36. However, a magazine spokesman comments, "As time has gone on and women have become more athletic, more in the business world and more inclined to put themselves through fitness regimes, their bodies have changed, and we reflect that as well . . .."[158] Fair enough. Indeed, a recent reexamination of centerfold data shows that the trend toward increasing thinness seems to have stabilized and may actually have begun to reverse. Still, although the women shown in the magazine became somewhat heavier over the 21-year period the researchers reviewed, the Playmates remain markedly below weights medical experts consider normal for their age group.[159] Ironically, when researchers ask women to predict how

men will rate women of different body shapes, women choose thinner figures than do men. In other words, they think men prefer skinny fashion model types, when in fact the shapes men choose come closer to "real" women.[160]

And (as we saw earlier) now that traditional gender stereotypes are breaking down, we may continue to see changes in these ideals. Already, surveys show that a significantly lower proportion of girls aged 16 to 24 shave their armpits and legs as compared to about five yeas ago. Sales of shaving and hair removal products are down as well. The desire for a "natural" look no doubt is inspired by celebrities including Paris Jackson, Mo'nique, Madonna, Mary J. Blige, and Kate Middleton who proudly display body hair, scars, tattoos, and birthmarks, and even movements like "girlswillbeboys" that encourage women to shave their heads.[161]

The Western Ideal of Female Beauty

The French Parliament is talking about legislation that would regulate the minimum weight for fashion models. It wants to combat widespread problems among women who starve themselves to stay thin enough to succeed in this competitive business. If this law passes, a 5'7" model would need to weigh at least 120 pounds for a modeling agency to avoid criminal penalties. The "you can never be too thin or too rich" debate goes on in other countries as well, especially after the well-publicized deaths of several malnourished models—including a French woman who at one point before she died weighed only 55 pounds.

Images of impossibly thin and perfect women bombard young girls and women from the magazine rack, the TV, the movies, and the internet. The editors and artistic directors who disseminate these beauty ideals have a great deal of power, because they help to determine the yardsticks the rest of us use to decide if we make the grade. The irony is that these media standards are almost impossible to attain, because most of the svelte models we see literally do not exist in real life. Their bodies and faces are carefully edited and Photoshopped to remove wrinkles, trim waistlines, and even elongate necks. Advertisers in France are now legally required to inform consumers when a model's figure has been digitally altered to look slimmer.[162] In the U.S., the CVS chain took a bold step when the company declared that "We will not digitally alter or change a person's shape, size, proportion, skin or eye color or enhance or alter lines, wrinkles or other individual characteristics. We want our beauty aisle to be a place where our customers can always come to feel good, while representing and celebrating the authenticity and diversity of the communities we serve." CVS puts a "CVS Beauty Mark" label on images that have not been significantly retouched.[163]

Some people exaggerate the connection between self-esteem and appearance to such an extent that they sacrifice their health to attain what they consider to be a desirable body image. Women in particular tend to pick up messages from the media that the quality of their bodies reflects their self-worth, so it is not surprising that most (though certainly not all) major **body image distortions** occur among females. These psychological disorders cause the patient to believe that his or her body literally is bigger or smaller than others see it.

Researchers link a distorted body image to eating disorders including anorexia and bulimia. These may involve binge eating occurs (usually in private), in which a person may consume more than 5,000 calories at one time. The binge is followed by induced vomiting, abuse of laxatives, fasting, or overly strenuous exercise—a "purging" process that reasserts the woman's sense of control.

Most eating disorders occur among white, upper-middle-class teens and college-age women. Victims often have brothers or fathers who are hypercritical of their weight; these disorders are also associated with a history of sexual abuse.[164] In

The Tangled Web

At least 400 websites attract young people with "ana" and "mia," nicknames for anorexia and bulimia. These "communities" focus on what they call **thinspiration** as they offer tips on crash dieting, bingeing, vomiting, and hiding weight loss from concerned parents. **Group dieting** is a growing problem as consumers patronize blog rings devoted to excessive weight loss—especially when they challenge female college students to lose as much weight as possible before events such as spring break. In one typical post, a woman confessed to eating "one cracker, one strawberry and a little bit of soup" in a 24-hour period, whereas another recounted a lunch of a slice of mango and a stick of gum. These sites, often adorned with photos of ultrathin celebrities and slogans such as "Diet Coke Is Life," appeal to followers of an underground movement called *pro-ana* (pro-anorexia) who sometimes identify themselves in public when they wear red bracelets. As one blog proclaims.[173]

addition, a person's peers can encourage binge eating; groups such as athletic teams, cheerleading squads, and sororities may reinforce this practice. In one study of a college sorority, members' popularity within the group increased the more they binged.[165]

What Is Today's Ideal of Female Beauty?

Of course the pendulum is always moving because cultural changes modify the ideals of beauty that are dominant at one point in time. Kim Kardashian supposedly "broke the internet" when many thousands of people clicked on a link to see a revealing photo of her large (and allegedly Photoshop-enhanced) backside on the cover of *Paper* magazine.[166] A hit music video by Jennifer Lopez and Iggy Azalea called "Booty" helped to drive the trend toward, shall we say, a more pronounced female silhouette.

It's not surprising that standards are changing because the typical woman's body is no longer as "petite" as it used to be. The most commonly purchased dress today is a size 14; it was a size 8 in 1985! The size and shape of the "average" U.S. consumer is dramatically different from what it was 60 years ago; essentially the fashion industry is selling clothing to super thin women who don't exist (at least not many of them do). The U.S. government estimates that two-thirds of U.S. adults are overweight or obese. Nevertheless, apparel companies still develop clothing lines based on a 1941 military study that set sizing standards based on a small sample of mostly white, young (and presumably physically fit) female soldiers. Indeed, even the sizes we wear send messages about body ideals. Clothing manufacturers often offer **vanity sizing**, where they deliberately assign smaller sizes to garments. Women prefer to buy the smaller size, even if the label is inaccurate. Those who have low self-esteem related to appearance think of themselves more positively and believe they are thinner when they wear vanity sizes.[167]

In addition, standards based on this outdated snapshot of U.S. women need to recognize the diversity of today's ethnic population: According to current criteria, 78 percent of African American women and 72 percent of Hispanic women are overweight, compared with 58 percent of white women. Non-Caucasian body shapes differ as well; for example, Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans tend to be shorter than their Caucasian counterparts.

For several years Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty has drawn attention to unrealistic beauty ideals as it features women with imperfect bodies in advertising. One ad read, "Let's face it, firming the thighs of a size 8 supermodel wouldn't have been much of a challenge." Unilever initiated the campaign after its research showed that many women didn't believe its products worked because the women who used them in its ads didn't look realistic.[168] When the company asked 3,200 women around the world to describe their looks, most summed themselves up as "average" or "natural." Only 2 percent called themselves "beautiful."

Fattism and Body Positivity

The growing popularity of "full-figured" women, such as Oprah, Queen Latifah, and Rosie O'Donnell, and plus-size spokesmodels, such as Emme, also has helped to improve the self-esteem of larger women. In reality, plus-size clothes have been available for almost a century, ever since a Lithuanian immigrant, Lena Bryant (her name was later misspelled as "Lane" on a business form), transformed a maternity-wear business into a line for stout women in the 1920s. Today, mass-market stores and upscale designers like Elie Tahari have turned their attention to the larger woman. Alpine Butterfly sells vibrant, fashionable swimwear in sizes large to 5XL, while Swimsuits For All launched its first "fatkini" collection. Sports Illustrated, Eloquii, Forever21, and Fashion Nova all released plus size swim collections in 2017. These new brands are starting to take a bigger share of the $20 billion swimwear industry.[169]

The e-commerce site Rent the Runway replaces models with regular women and allows visitors to search for women of a certain age, height, weight, and even bust size to see how that dress looks on someone similar. Shoppers can review dresses they have rented and have the option to list their height, weight, and chest size alongside their reviews. That feature allows other women to search for customers who have similar dimensions and ask them questions. The strategy seems to be working: The company found that the conversion rate for shoppers who clicked on real photos was double that of shoppers who clicked on models' photos. [175]

Despite these changes, **fattism** is deeply ingrained in our culture: As early as nursery school age, children prefer drawings of peers in wheelchairs, on crutches, or with facial disfigurements to those of fat children. One survey of girls aged 12 to 19 reported that 55 percent said they see ads "all the time" that make them want to go on a diet.[170] A recent advertising controversy testifies to our thinness mania: It was bad enough when Pepsi unveiled its new "skinny" diet soda can. When the company paired the launch with Fashion Week—the huge promotion for an industry that celebrates skinny models (some of whom have died from anorexia)—the National Eating Disorders Association protested and Pepsi had to apologize. The organization also persuaded Apple to shut down an ad campaign because it was built around the message, "You can never be too thin or too powerful."[171]

However, larger consumers are fighting back against these stereotypes. As the name of a Dutch magazine proclaims, *Big is Beautiful*.[172] A recent study focused on **fatshionistas**, plus-sized consumers who want more options from mainstream fashion marketers. A blog post the researchers found sums up the alienation many of these women feel:

> For many of us who were fat as children and teens, clothes shopping was nothing short of tortuous. Even if our parents were supportive, the selection of "husky" or "half-sizes" for kids was the absolute pits. When that sort of experience is reinforced as a child, we often take it into adulthood . . . . We simply have been socialized not to expect better than to be treated as fashion afterthoughts.

The researchers investigated the triggers that mobilize these women to try to change the market to make it friendlier to shoppers who don't conform to a pencil-thin



This swimsuit line challenges the typical emphasis on superthin models.
Source: Alpine Butterfly Swim, LLC.

ideal of beauty. They found that indeed these consumers can agitate for change, especially when they create a common community of like-minded people (the "Fat Acceptance Movement") who can rally behind others who have successfully challenged the status quo.[174]

Ideals of Male Beauty

A 22-year-old Indian newlywed brutally murdered her new husband (their parents matched them up) because he wasn't handsome.[176] Yes, men's looks matter too.

It's hard not to notice that many business leaders and celebrities recently have sprouted a lot of facial hair. Beards were a no-no for over a century; in the early to mid-1800s people commonly associated them with socialists and others on the margins of society. Fridrich Engels (who co-authored *The Communist Manifesto* with Karl Marx) once sponsored a "moustache evening" to taunt the clean-shaven members of the bourgeois class.

After that period, however, the "beard movement" came into fashion as the Gold Rush and the Civil War made shaving optional; and some rebelled against a world of "woman-faced men." As Robber Barons like full-bearded Jay Gould and Andrew Carnegie flouted their millions, beards now became linked to capitalists. The pendulum swung yet again, however, as workers' rebellions evoked images of bearded men committing violent acts against their bosses. King C. Gillette invented the safety razor in 1901, and the clean-shaven look was back. Now, the pendulum has moved again: Google's co-founder Sergey Brin, Goldman Sachs's chief executive, Lloyd C. Blankfein, and Marc Benioff, the billionaire founder and chief executive of Salesforce, all sport prominent facial hair.[177]

As this brief history of facial hair illustrates, a society's ideals of beauty for men change as well. Who could confuse Justin Bieber with Johnny Depp? Male ideals involve length of hair, the presence and type of facial hair (or not), musculature, and of course clothing styles and accessories (anyone for a "murse" aka "man bag?"). We also distinguish among ideals of beauty for men in terms of facial features, musculature, and facial hair. In fact, one national survey that asked both men and women to comment on male aspects of appearance found that the dominant standard of beauty for men is a strongly masculine, muscled body, though women tend to prefer men with less muscle mass than men themselves strive to attain.[178]

Advertisers appear to have the males' ideal in mind; a study of men who appear in advertisements found that most sport the strong and muscular physique of the male stereotype.[179] More than 40 percent of boys in middle school and high school say they exercise regularly to increase muscle mass. Perhaps more troubling, 38 percent say they use protein supplements, and nearly 6 percent admit they have experimented with steroids.[180]

Body Decoration and Mutilation

People in every culture adorn or alter their bodies in some way. Decorating the physical self serves a number of purposes:[181]

- **To separate group members from nonmembers**—One Native American tribe, the Chinook, pressed the head of a newborn between two boards for a year, which permanently altered its shape. In our society, teens go out of their way to adopt distinctive hair and clothing styles that will separate them from adults.
- **To place the individual in the social organization**—Many cultures engage in puberty rites during which a boy symbolically becomes a man. Some young men in part of Ghana paint their bodies with white stripes to resemble skeletons to



A Russian artist takes body decoration to a new extreme: He describes himself as a platypus – and indeed his lips extend more than two inches from his face.
Source: News Dog Media.

symbolize the death of their child status. In Western cultures, this rite may involve some form of mild self-mutilation or engaging in dangerous activities.

- **To place the person in a gender category**—The Tchikrin, American Indians of South America, insert a string of beads in a boy's lip to enlarge it. Western women wear lipstick to enhance femininity. At the turn of the 20th century, small lips were fashionable because they represented women's submissive role at that time.[182] Today, big, red lips are considered by many to be provocative, sexy and desirable.
- **To enhance sex-role identification**—We can compare the modern use of high heels, which podiatrists agree are a prime cause of knee and hip problems, backaches, and fatigue, with the traditional Asian practice of foot binding to enhance femininity. As one doctor observed, "When [women] get home, they can't get their high-heeled shoes off fast enough. But every doctor in the world could yell from now until Doomsday, and women would still wear them."[183]
- **To indicate desired social conduct**—The Suya of South America wear ear ornaments to emphasize the importance placed on listening and obedience in their culture.
- **To indicate high status or rank**—The Hidates, American Indians of North America, wear feather ornaments that indicate how many people they have killed. In our society, some people wear glasses with clear lenses, even though they do not have eye problems, to enhance their perceived status.
- **To provide a sense of security**—Consumers often wear lucky charms, amulets, and rabbits' feet to protect them from the "evil eye." Some modern women wear a "mugger whistle" around their necks for a similar reason.

Body Anxiety

A billboard that shows a woman wearing a tank top and raising her arm to show off her underarm proclaims, "Dear New Jersey: When people call you 'the Armpit of America,' take it as a compliment. Sincerely, Dove." It's part of a campaign for Dove Advanced Care, a new deodorant product with moisturizers for underarms."[184] It looks like women now have another body part to worry about.

Because many consumers experience a gap between their real and ideal physical selves, they often go to great lengths to change aspects of their appearance. From

Marketing Pitfall

In a previous era, wealthy women avoided the sun at all costs lest people get the impression that they had to work for a living outdoors. The bias toward pale skin extends to other cultures as well. An ad on Malaysian television showed an attractive college student who can't get a second glance from a boy at the next desk. "She's pretty," he says to himself, "but . . ." Then she applies Pond's Skin Lightening Moisturizer by Unilever PLC, and she reappears looking several shades paler. Now the boy wonders, "Why didn't I notice her before?" In many Asian cultures, people also historically equate light skin with wealth and status, and they associate dark skin with the laboring class that toils in the fields. This stereotype persists today: In a survey, 74 percent of men in Malaysia, 68 percent in Hong Kong, and 55 percent in Taiwan said they are more attracted to women with fair complexions. About a third of the female respondents in each country said they use skin-whitening products. Olay has a product it calls White Radiance, and L'Oréal sells a White Perfect line.[186]

In contrast, Caucasians in the U.S. today equate a tanned complexion with health, physical activity, and an abundance of leisure time. Indoor tanning at salons with names such as Eternal Summer and Tan City is popular among many U.S. young people, despite evidence that links this practice to skin cancer. A recent analysis found that tanning beds account for as many as 400,000 cases of skin cancer in the United States each year, including 6,000 cases of melanoma, which is the deadliest form of the disease. The rate of melanoma among women younger than 40 has risen significantly in recent years. Public health officials report that one-third of Caucasian teenage girls say they have engaged in indoor tanning. And, about half of the top-rated colleges in the United States offer tanning beds either on campus or in off-campus housing.[187] Is skin cancer too high a price to pay to attain an ideal of beauty?



Ads for skin-whitening products in Africa send conflicting messages about beauty, identity and social standing.

Spanx to bras, cosmetics to plastic surgery, tanning salons to diet drinks, a multitude of products and services promise to alter aspects of the physical self. It is difficult to overstate the importance of the physical self-concept (and consumers' desires to improve their appearances) to many marketing activities. To rub salt into the wound, there is evidence that exposure to these messages increases the desire to conform to a cultural ideal (such as thinness for women) but also decreases a person's belief that they can attain this ideal. One recent study reported that when women in a weight-loss program were repeatedly exposed to images of a thin model, they saw their dieting goals as less attainable and actually consumed more unhealthy snacks.[185]

Cosmetic Surgery

Consumers increasingly choose to have cosmetic surgery to change a poor body image or simply to enhance appearance.[188] Doctors report a surge in surgeries among young people who say they want to perfect their faces and bodies in order to look better on selfies![189] In Venezuela, billboards advertise bank loans to obtain breast augmentations; a political candidate even tried to finance his campaign by raffling off a breast lift.[190] Cosmetic procedures are so fashionable that a woman with implants is often casually referred to as "an operated woman."

South Korea, which boasts the highest rate of cosmetic surgery of any country, is attracting hordes of Chinese consumers who flock there for double eyelid surgery or more radical facial restructuring that often involves painful procedures to alter their faces into a V-shape that results in delicate features their culture values. The Korean government even provides funding to promote the country's **medical tourism** business. This term describes a rapidly growing sector of the global economy that encourages consumers to travel to other countries for surgical procedures that might be unavailable, more dangerous, or more expensive where they live.[191]

U.S. doctors perform about 1.7 million procedures per year. The top five are breast augmentation, liposuction, nose reshaping, eyelid surgery, and tummy tucks. And, 40 percent of breast reduction operations are performed on males. As cosmetic surgery becomes increasingly acceptable (even expected in some circles), consumers and the



In some South American countries, women are confronted with a culture of increasingly enhanced physiques fueled by beauty pageants and plastic surgery.
Source: Meridith Kohut/The New York Times.

medical profession expand the scope of body parts they want to alter. Perhaps spurred by fashions such as low-rise jeans and spandex workout gear that call attention to the derrière, for example, buttock augmentation surgery is gaining in popularity. The operation typically costs about $20,000, so clearly it's not intended for the bottom of the market.[192]

The craze for "modifications" even extends to younger consumers who (you would think) don't need it—at least not yet. The American Society of Plastic Surgeons reports that doctors annually give about 12,000 Botox injections to U.S. teens aged 13 to 19. Although there are some sound medical reasons for this, such as abnormal twitching of the eyelid or involuntary contractions of neck muscles, apparently most young patients elect to have the treatment to address perceived imperfections such as a too-gummy smile and a too-square jaw. Some teenagers mistakenly think that Botox can prevent wrinkles.[193]

Tattoos

Tattoos—both temporary and permanent—today are a popular form of body adornment.[194] Mattel Inc. even released Totally Stylin' Tattoos Barbie, which comes with tiny tattoos her young owners can put on her body. The doll also comes with wash-off tats kids can use to ink themselves.[195]

Although consumers young and old (okay, mostly young) sport body art to make statements about the self, these skin designs actually serve some of the same functions that other kinds of body painting do in primitive cultures. Tattoos (from the Tahitian *ta-tu*) have deep roots in folk art. Until recently, the images were crude and were primarily death symbols (e.g., a skull), animals (especially panthers, eagles, and snakes), pinup women, or military designs. More current influences include science fiction themes, Japanese symbolism, and tribal designs.

Historically, people associated tattoos with social outcasts. For example, authorities in 6th-century Japan tattooed the faces and arms of criminals to identify them, and these markings served the same purpose in 19th-century prisons and 20th-century concentration camps. Marginal groups, such as bikers or Japanese *yakuza* (gang members), often use these emblems to express group identity and solidarity.

Today, a tattoo is a fairly risk-free way to express an adventurous side of the self. About one in five Americans have at least one, and women are twice as likely to sport a tattoo compared to men. The most popular ink site for women: the ankle.[196] And some hardy souls are trying the next generation of tattooing—so-called **morbid ink** that incorporates DNA (of a partner, dog, or whatever) into the ink itself so that you carry your loved one's remains with you for the rest of your life.[197]

As more people jump on the tattoo bandwagon it's inevitable that some of them will regret this decision later (perhaps when they wake up the next morning?). Tattoo removal centers with names such as Dr. Tattoff, Tat2BeGone, and Tattoo MD meet the need to deal with so-called tattoo regret. Industry data indicate that at least 45,000 Americans undergo tattoo removal each year. Unfortunately—at least for now—it's a lot more complicated to remove a tattoo than to put one on. A design that cost several hundred dollars could require several thousand dollars and many laser sessions to remove.[198] The moral: Before you get a significant other's name etched onto your body, be pretty sure you plan to stay together.

Body Piercing

Like tattoos, body piercing evolved from a practice associated with fringe groups to a popular fashion statement. Historians credit the initial impetus for the mainstreaming of what had been an underground West Coast fad to Aerosmith's 1993 video for the song "Cryin'," in which actress Alicia Silverstone gets both a navel ring and a tattoo.[199] Piercings can range from a hoop protruding from a navel to scalp implants, where metal posts are inserted in the skull (do not try this at home!). Publications such as *Piercing Fans International Quarterly* have seen their circulations soar, and websites attract numerous followers. According to one recent estimate, about 14 percent of Americans have at least one body piercing other than in an earlobe. About three-fourths of these people are female; the most popular site is the navel.[200]

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. The self-concept strongly influences consumer behavior.

Consumers' self-concepts are reflections of their attitudes toward themselves. Whether these attitudes are positive or negative, they will help to guide many purchase decisions; we can use products to bolster self-esteem or to "reward" the self.

We choose many products because we think that they are similar to our personalities. The symbolic interactionist perspective of the self implies that each of us actually has many selves, and we require a different set of products as props to play each role. We view many things other than the body as part of who we are. People use valued objects, cars, homes, and even attachments to sports teams or national monuments to define the self, when they incorporate these into the extended self.

2. Gender identity is an important component of a consumer's self-concept.

Sex roles, or a society's conceptions about masculinity and femininity, exert a powerful influence on our

expectations about the brands we should consume. Advertising plays an important role because it portrays idealized expectations about gender identity.

3. **The way we think about our bodies (and the way our culture tells us we should think) is a key component of self-esteem.**

   A person's conception of his or her body also provides feedback to self-image. A culture communicates specific ideals of beauty, and consumers go to great lengths to attain these. Many consumer activities involve manipulating the body, whether through dieting, cosmetic surgery, piercing, or tattooing. Sometimes these activities are carried to an extreme because people try too hard to live up to cultural ideals. One common manifestation is eating disorders, diseases in which women in particular become obsessed with thinness.

   Body decoration or mutilation may serve such functions as separating group members from nonmembers, marking the individual's status or rank within a social organization or within a gender category (e.g., homosexual), or even providing a sense of security or good luck.

KEY TERMS

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REVIEW

6-1 List three dimensions that describe the self-concept.
6-2 Compare and contrast the real versus the ideal self. List three products for which a person is likely to use each type of self as a reference point when he or she considers a purchase.
6-3 Have ideals of beauty in the United States changed during the past 50 years? If so, how?
6-4 What is fattism?
6-5 What does "the looking-glass self" mean? How do feelings about the self influence what we buy?
6-6 How do Eastern and Western cultures differ in how people think about the self?
6-7 How did tattoos originate?

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

6-8 As wearable computing takes off, so too will the possibility of "chipping" people so that they can directly interact with their devices without having to go through an interface like a smartphone. What ethical problems might this practice pose? Do the potential benefits outweigh the risks?

6-9 At the end of the day, are you what you buy?

6-10 Are you what you post online?

6-11 Shopping for back-to-school "basics" used to mean T-shirts, jeans, socks, and some notebooks. Now, many parents have a new item to add to the list: tattoos. About 45 percent of parents polled say that hair highlights, teeth whitening, and even tattoos are among the items they will buy their kids to go back to school.[201] What (if any) age is appropriate for kids to get these grownup additions?

6-12 "Breastaurants" represent a popular category of dining establishments. Is it ethical to hire women as waitresses because they have certain physical characteristics? Is it ethical to exclude others (including men) from these jobs if they don't?

6-13 One consequence of the continual evolution of sex roles is that men are concerned as never before with their appearance. Men spend $7.7 billion on grooming products globally each year. A wave of male cleansers, moisturizers, sunscreens, depilatories, and body sprays has washed up on U.S. shores, largely from European marketers. L'Oréal Paris reports that men's skincare products are now its fastest-growing sector. In Europe, 24 percent of men younger than age 30 use skincare products—and 80 percent of young Korean men do. Even some cosmetics products, like foundation and eyeliner, are catching on in some segments, though men aren't comfortable owning up to using them. In fact, a British makeup product looks like a ballpoint pen so men can apply it secretly at the office.[202] Over the past decade, the media paid a lot of attention to so-called "metrosexuals": straight males who are interested in fashion, home design, gourmet cooking, and personal care products. How widespread is this phenomenon? Do you see men in your age group focusing on these interests? Should marketers change how they think of male sex roles today?

6-14 Some activists object to Axe's male-focused marketing because they claim it demeans women. In contrast, Dove's "Natural Beauty" campaign gets kudos because it promotes more realistic expectations for girls. Guess what? The same company—Unilever—owns both Axe and Dove. Is it hypocritical for a big company to sponsor positive messages about women in one of its divisions while it sends a different message in another?

6-15 The mainstream media have sent a clear message for the last several years: It's cool to be slutty. Role models like Paris Hilton, Lindsay Lohan, Britney Spears, and even Bratz dolls convey standards about how far preteens and teens should go when they broadcast their sexuality. Now, as these messages seem to go over the top (at least in the eyes of some concerned parents), we start to see early signs of a backlash because some who subscribe to the "modest movement" advocate a return to styles that leave almost everything to the imagination. At the *PureFashion* website, girls get style tips recommending skirts and dresses that fall no more than four fingers above the knee and no tank tops without a sweater or jacket over them; the *ModestApparel* site proclaims, "because a modest woman is a beautiful woman."[203] Is our culture moving from a celebration of "girls gone wild" to "girls gone mild"?

6-16 The clothing chain H&M features computer-generated models on its website. The company drew criticism for presenting only picture-perfect people; for example, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation accused the chain of "creating unrealistic physical ideals." A company spokesman defended the move by explaining that these unreal bodies would ensure that the garments remain the focus of online shoppers' attention. In contrast, the teen-oriented magazine *Seventeen* pledged to always feature "real girls" in its pages. This change was in response to an online petition that gathered nearly 85,000 signatures in just 4 days. The 14-year-old reader who posted the petition stated, "For the sake of all the struggling girls all over America, who read *Seventeen* and think these fake images are what they should be, I'm stepping up. I know how hurtful these Photoshopped images can be."[204] What do you think of this argument—does the use of only "perfect" bodies create a problem for real shoppers?

6-17 Many people feel that a preoccupation with physical appearance diverts consumers from discovering true happiness, i.e. "you can't judge a book by its cover." On the other hand, recent research finds that a heightened interest in appearance can actually improve the mental health of elderly people; putting on make-up can slow

the progress of dementia by helping sufferers keep their brains active.[205] Numerous organizations provide wigs to chemotherapy patients who lose their hair to bolster their self-esteem. Is a focus on looks ultimately a positive or a negative force? How can marketers encourage a "healthy" interest in appearance?

▶ APPLY

6-18 If our possessions do indeed come to be a part of us, how do we bring ourselves to part with these precious items? Researchers find that people often take steps to distance themselves from a favored object before they get rid of it. Strategies they identified include taking pictures and videos of the objects; moving them into an out-of-the way location such as a garage or an attic; or washing, ironing, and wrapping the item. Interview people you know who have disposed of a product that was important to them—for example, a well-used car or a favorite sweatshirt that finally had too many holes to keep. What steps did they take to "divest" themselves of this attachment (such as removing personal items from a car before selling it, and so on)?[206]

6-19 Construct a "consumption biography" of a friend or family member. Make a list of or photograph his or her favorite possessions, and see if you or others can describe this person's personality just from the information provided by this catalog.

6-20 Interview victims of burglaries, or people who have lost personal property in floods, hurricanes, or other natural disasters. How do they go about reconstructing their possessions, and what effect did the loss appear to have on them? Similarly, poll your class: If their house or apartment were on fire and they could only take one possession with them as they evacuate, what would it be?

6-21 Watch a set of ads on TV that feature men and women. Try to imagine the characters with reversed roles (i.e., the male roles played by women and vice versa). Can you see any differences in assumptions about sex-typed behavior?

6-22 How do people you know feel about their cars? Interview some of them about the "relationships" they have. Do they decorate their cars? Do they have nicknames for them? And, check out a video on YouTube called "I Love My Car" to really see how deep these relationships can go.

6-23 Many advertisers routinely purchase stock photography when they need an image of a certain kind of person to insert in an ad. Many photos of women reflect common stereotypes, ranging from the crisp businesswoman who wears a suit and glasses and holds a briefcase to the smiling mother who pours milk into cereal bowls for her kids at breakfast. Sheryl Sandberg, the Facebook executive who is an advocate for women in business, started an organization called Lean In to promote leadership. Lean In has now partnered with Getty Images, one of the biggest stock photography companies, to offer an image collection that represents women differently. The new collection depicts women as surgeons, painters, bakers, soldiers, and hunters. There are girls riding skateboards and women lifting weights.[207] Look through a sample of current magazines and collect images of women. To what extent do they represent a range of roles? Categorize these images according to the type of product advertised and the situation the photo depicts (e.g., multitasking woman holding a tablet and a baby, happy homemaker, and so on). Based on what you find, what messages do our media give us about gender roles today?

CASE STUDY

Retailer Eloquii Believes That Fashion Doesn't Stop at Size 12

For years, Hollywood and the advertising media have perpetuated a stereotypical image of women. As a result, many consumers have the unrealistic expectation that women should be poreless, hipless, silken-haired, high-cheekboned, size 0, 20-year-old goddesses. But is this beauty myth finally changing? Fashion retailer Eloquii believes that it should.[208] It's offering normal-sized women an array of apparel offerings that meet their desire to be fashionable but in a realistic way.

It's no secret that we are growing as a population—not just in quantity, but in our individual sizes. The most recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention numbers indicate that more than 70 percent of U.S. adults ages 20 and over were overweight or obese.[209] The mean waist size for women in that age range was 38 inches, a size 16 in most apparel brands. However, regular sizes (known as "straight" sizes in the industry) run only up to size 12.[210] Apparel manufacturers have responded with "plus" sizes,

which begin at size 14. And how many American women wear those sizes and higher? Plunkett Research estimates 68 percent. That group drove sales of almost $21.4 billion in 2016 in the plus-size category. That's 6 percent higher than the prior year—and twice the growth rate of the overall U.S. apparel market.[211]

Founded in 1900 in New York, Lane Bryant is the oldest and best-known brand that focuses on the fashion needs of larger women. The company actually coined the term "plus size."[212] Now owned by Ascena Retail Group, Lane Bryant is both a fashion brand and a major retailer with 800 stores in 48 states.[213] Other major retailers have jumped into the plus-size market as well, including H&M, Gap/Old Navy, Target, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdale's, and Macy's.[214]

However, some consumers still complain about the limited selection in styles and sizes these stores offer. Even market leader Lane Bryant only offers up to size 34.[215] And the shopping experience can be intimidating, with special parts of the store devoted to plus-sizes. This requires women to identify themselves as being plus-sized and many shoppers don't relish that. And, a lot of the fashions offered in straight sizes are not even available in plus. In one survey, 77 percent of plus-size women said they can't find clothing that fits well and 73 percent say sizing is inconsistent across brands.[216]

Eloquii is among the upstarts to address those concerns. The brand used to be the plus-size label of The Limited, but was dropped in 2013. At that time a few key employees found an investor and together they started a new online-only business focused on the fashion needs of plus-size women. Rather than just "sizing up" The Limited products, Eloquii used draping and unusual cuts to create flattering silhouettes (rather than the baggy, high-wasted, "empire cuts" traditionally used).[217] "When we set up our factory network and supplier base, we weren't looking for apparel factories that had done plus before," says CEO Mariah Chase. Instead, they found new factories and trained them to produce the unique fit and construction of the Eloquii designs.[218]

It's no accident that Eloquii and other new entrants chose an online strategy. In addition to the convenience, plus-size shoppers get the added benefit of avoiding the stigma of shopping in a regular store's "big woman" section or at a dedicated store like Lane Bryant.[219] Online also offers efficiencies for the retailer. Matthew Kaness, CEO of competitor Modcloth says, "We can constantly add sizes to every item without worrying about, 'How many extra-smalls and 2Xs should I send to the Tallahassee store for the third week of August?'"[220]

But serving this market is not without its costs. The design process is more involved. Moving from size 2 to 12 can be a simple matter of scale, but plus sizes may require a separate pattern to account for different proportions.[221] The products can also cost more to manufacture. There is more material involved and overseas factories are often not set up to make these sizes. Changes must be made to cutting tables and machines, all of which increase prices.[222]

Despite these challenges, Eloquii is winning in the marketplace. It has doubled its sales every year since 2014, reaching around $80 million for fiscal 2017.[223] The company is even dipping a toe in the bricks-and-mortar world, with plans to open up to 40 stores in the next four years.[224]

Other fashion brands and traditional retailers are taking notice. Michael Kors and Comme des Garçons have added plus sizes in their high-fashion lines, and now H&M and Target offer specific collections for plus-size women. Nordstrom is integrating plus sizes with straight sizes, adding larger mannequins, and showcasing plus-size models on its website. Even Walmart is getting in on the game with plans to acquire ModCloth, one of the pioneers in size-inclusive fashion.[225]

There is no sign that the population is slimming down, and as our bodies grow, the market for plus-size fashions grows as well. Attitudes are slowly changing, with more positive media attention and more balanced ways in which plus size consumers view themselves. Perhaps success cannot be declared until the market is no longer considered something "different," as Alexandra Waldman, founder of Universal Standard notes: "If we are still talking about a plus-size market 10 years from now, we will have failed."[226]

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 6–1 Explain the success that Eloquii and similar brands have experienced in relation to self-concept, self-esteem, and self-consciousness. How can the plus-size industry leverage what we know about consumer behavior to address self-esteem issues? Be sure to address the unique challenges facing plus-size brands in today's marketplace.

CS 6–2 Discuss the real-world changes that appear to be occurring with respect to media images of women. What are the reasons for this? Find two recent articles or examples that illustrate these changes.

CS 6–3 How do you reconcile the greater degree of acceptance of plus-size women with the parallel emphasis our society continues to place on thinness (as evidenced by the billions we spend on diet products, exercise, and so on)? Given the health problems associated with obesity (heart disease, diabetes, and so on) should the industry continue to encourage this acceptance? What role is social media playing?

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If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

6-24 The chapter discusses the "empty self" explanation for the popularity of selfies among young people. Do you agree?

6-25 Technological advances are creating "superabled" athletes who compete with enhanced bodies such as carbon fiber limbs. Sports organizations such as Major League Baseball and the National Football League already screen carefully for use of steroids and other performance enhancing drugs. Should they also regulate athletes who have artificial limbs or other body parts?

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7

Personality, Lifestyles, and Values

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why:

7-1 A consumer's personality influences the way he or she responds to marketing stimuli, but efforts to use this information in marketing contexts meet with mixed results.

7-2 Brands have personalities.

7-3 A lifestyle defines a pattern of consumption that reflects a person's choices of how to spend his or her time and money, and these choices are essential to define consumer identity.

7-4 Psychographics go beyond simple demographics to help marketers understand and reach different consumer segments.

7-5 Underlying values often drive consumer motivations.



Source: Alfgar/Shutterstock.

Jackie and Hank, executives in a high-powered Los Angeles advertising agency, are exchanging ideas about how they are going to spend the big bonus everyone in the firm is getting for landing a new account. They can't help but snicker at their friend Rose in accounting, who avidly surfs the internet for information about a state-of-the-art home theater system she plans to install in her condo. What a couch potato! Hank, who fancies himself a bit of a daredevil, plans to blow his bonus on a thrill-seeking trip to Colorado, where a week of outrageous bungee jumping awaits him (assuming he lives to tell about it, but that uncertainty is half the fun). Jackie replies, "Been there, done that . . . Believe it or not, I'm staying put right here—heading over to Santa Monica to catch some waves." Seems that the surfing bug has bitten her since she stumbled onto Jetty Girl, an online resource for women who surf.[1]

Jackie and Hank marvel at how different they are from Rose, who's content to spend her downtime watching sappy old movies or actually reading books. All three make about the same salary, and Jackie and Rose were sorority sisters at USC. How can their tastes be so different? Oh well, they figure, that's why they make chocolate and vanilla ice cream.

OBJECTIVE 7-1
A consumer's personality influences the way he or she responds to marketing stimuli, but efforts to use this information in marketing contexts meet with mixed results.

Personality

Jackie and Hank are typical of many people who search for new (and even risky) ways to spend their leisure time. This desire translates into big business for the "adventure travel" industry, which provides white-knuckle experiences.[2] In the old days, the California beach culture relegated women to the status of landlocked "Gidgets" who sat on shore while their boyfriends rode the surf. Now (inspired by the female surfers in the movie *Blue Crush* and then by Bethany Hamilton, the woman documented in the movie *Soul Surfer* who lost her left arm to a shark and returned to the sport), women fuel the sport's resurgence in popularity. Roxy rides the wave with its collections of women's surf apparel; it even includes a feature on its website that lets users design their own bikinis.[3]

Just what does make Jackie and Hank so different from their more sedate friend Rose? One answer may lie in the concept of **personality**, which refers to a person's unique psychological makeup and how it consistently influences the way a person responds to his or her environment. Do all people *have* personalities? Certainly we can wonder about some we meet! Actually, even though the answer seems like a no-brainer, some psychologists argue that the concept of personality may not be valid. Many studies find that people do not seem to exhibit stable personalities. Because people don't necessarily behave the same way in all situations, they argue that this is merely a convenient way to categorize people.

Intuitively, this argument is a bit hard to accept, because we tend to see others in a limited range of situations, and so they *do* appear to act consistently. However, we each know that we ourselves are not all *that* consistent; we may be wild and crazy at times and serious and responsible at others. Although certainly not all psychologists have abandoned the idea of personality, many now recognize that a person's underlying characteristics are but one part of the puzzle, and situational factors often play a large role in determining behavior.[4] Although we may undergo dramatic changes as we grow up, in adulthood measures of personality stay relatively stable. Studies of thousands of people's scores on the widely used measurement instrument the **Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)** confirm that our personalities tend to stabilize by the age of 30. For example, most of us become less interested in thrill seeking as we focus more on self-discipline. Enjoy it while you can![5]

Consumer Behavior on the Couch: Freudian Theory

The famous psychologist Sigmund Freud proposed that much of one's adult personality stems from a fundamental conflict between a person's desire to gratify his or her physical needs and the necessity to function as a responsible member of society. This struggle plays out in the mind among three systems. (Note: These systems do *not* refer to physical parts of the brain.) Let's quickly review each.

Freudian Systems

The **id** is about immediate gratification; it is the "party animal" of the mind. It operates according to the **pleasure principle**; that is, our basic desire to maximize pleasure and avoid pain guides our behavior. The id is selfish and illogical. It directs a person's psychic energy toward pleasurable acts without any regard for consequences.

The **superego** is the counterweight to the id. This system is essentially the person's conscience. It internalizes society's rules (especially as parents teach them to us) and tries to prevent the id from seeking selfish gratification. Finally, the **ego** is the

system that mediates between the id and the superego. It's basically a referee in the fight between temptation and virtue. The ego tries to balance these opposing forces according to the **reality principle**, which means it finds ways to gratify the id that the outside world will find acceptable. (Hint: This is where Freudian theory primarily applies to marketing.) These conflicts occur on an unconscious level, so the person is not necessarily aware of the underlying reasons for his or her behavior.

How is Freud's work relevant to consumer behavior? In particular, it highlights the potential importance of unconscious motives that guide our purchases. The implication is that consumers cannot necessarily tell us their true motivation when they choose products, even if we can devise a sensitive way to ask them directly. The Freudian perspective also raises the possibility that the ego relies on the symbolism in products to compromise between the demands of the id and the prohibitions of the superego. People channel their unacceptable desire into acceptable outlets when they use products that signify these underlying desires. This is the connection between product symbolism and motivation: The product stands for, or represents, a consumer's true goal, which is socially unacceptable or unattainable. By acquiring the product, the person vicariously experiences the forbidden fruit.

"Sometimes a Cigar Is Just a Cigar": Products as Sexual Symbols

Most Freudian applications in marketing relate to a product's supposed sexual symbolism. For example, some analysts speculate that owning a sports car is a substitute for sexual gratification (especially for men going through a "midlife crisis"). Indeed, some people do seem inordinately attached to their cars, and they may spend many hours lovingly washing and polishing them. An Infiniti ad reinforces the belief that cars symbolically satisfy consumers' sexual needs in addition to their functional ones when it describes one model as "what happens when you cross sheet metal and desire." Other approaches focus on male-oriented symbolism—so-called *phallic symbols*—that appeals to women. Although Freud (supposedly) joked that, "sometimes a cigar is just a cigar," many popular applications of Freud's ideas revolve around the use of objects that resemble sex organs (e.g., cigars, trees, or swords for male sex organs; tunnels for female sex organs). This focus stems from Freud's analysis of dreams, which he believed communicate repressed desires in the form of symbolically rich stories.

Motivational Research

In the 1950s, **motivational research** borrowed Freudian ideas to understand the deeper meanings of products and advertisements. This approach adapted psychoanalytical (Freudian) interpretations with a heavy emphasis on unconscious motives. It basically assumed that we channel socially unacceptable needs into acceptable outlets—including product substitutes.

This perspective relies on *depth interviews* with individual consumers. Instead of asking many consumers a few general questions about product usage and combining these responses with those of many other consumers in a representative statistical sample, a motivational researcher talks to only a few people but probes deeply into each respondent's purchase motivations. A depth interview might take several hours, and it's based on the assumption that the respondent cannot immediately articulate his or her *latent* or underlying motives. A carefully trained interviewer can derive these only after extensive questioning and interpretation.

Ernest Dichter, a psychoanalyst who trained with Freud's disciples in Vienna in the early part of the 20th century, pioneered this work. Dichter conducted in-depth interview studies on more than 230 different products, and actual marketing campaigns incorporated many of his findings.[6] For example, Esso (now Exxon in the

United States) for many years reminded consumers to "Put a Tiger in Your Tank" after Dichter found that people responded well to this powerful animal symbolism containing vaguely sexual undertones. Table 7.1 provides a summary of major consumption motivations he identified.

Some critics reacted to the motivational studies that ad agencies conducted in much the same way they did to subliminal perception studies (see Chapter 3). They charged that this approach gave advertisers the power to manipulate consumers.[7] However, many consumer researchers felt the research lacked sufficient rigor and validity because the interpretations are so subjective.[8] Because the analyst based his conclusions on his own judgment after he interviewed a small number of people, critics were dubious about whether the findings would generalize to a larger market. In addition, because the original motivational researchers were heavily influenced by orthodox Freudian theory, their interpretations usually involved sexual themes. This emphasis tends to overlook other plausible causes for behavior. Still, motivational research had great appeal to at least some marketers for several reasons:

- Motivational research is less expensive to conduct than large-scale, quantitative survey data collection because interviewing and data-processing costs are relatively minimal.

TABLE 7.1 A Motivational Researcher Identifies Consumption Motives

Motive	Associated Products
Power-masculinity-virility	Power: Sugary products and large breakfasts (to charge oneself up), bowling, electric trains, hot rods, power tools Masculinity-virility: Coffee, red meat, heavy shoes, toy guns, buying fur coats for women, shaving with a razor
Security	Ice cream (to feel like a loved child again), full drawer of neatly ironed shirts, real plaster walls (to feel sheltered), home baking, hospital care
Eroticism	Sweets (to lick), gloves (to be removed by woman as a form of undressing), a man lighting a woman's cigarette (to create a tension-filled moment culminating in pressure, then relaxation)
Moral purity-cleanliness	White bread, cotton fabrics (to connote chastity), harsh household cleaning chemicals (to make housewives feel moral after using), bathing (to be equated with Pontius Pilate, who washed blood from his hands), oatmeal (sacrifice, virtue)
Social acceptance	Companionship: Ice cream (to share fun), coffee, love and affection: toys (to express love for children), sugar and honey (to express terms of affection) Acceptance: soap, beauty products
Individuality	Gourmet foods, foreign cars, cigarette holders, vodka, perfume, fountain pens
Status	Scotch: ulcers, heart attacks, indigestion (to show one has a high-stress, important job!), carpets (to show one does not live on bare earth like peasants)
Femininity	Cakes and cookies, dolls, silk, tea, household curios
Reward	Cigarettes, candy, alcohol, ice cream, cookies
Mastery over environment	Kitchen appliances, boats, sporting goods, cigarette lighters
Disalienation (a desire to feel connectedness to things)	Home decorating, skiing, morning radio broadcasts (to feel "in touch" with the world)
Magic-mystery	Soups (having healing powers), paints (change the mood of a room), carbonated drinks (magical effervescent property), vodka (romantic history), unwrapping of gifts

Source: Data from Jeffrey F. Durgee, "Interpreting Dichter's Interpretations: An Analysis of Consumption Symbolism," in *The Handbook of Consumer Motivation, Marketing and Semiotics: Selected Papers from the Copenhagen Symposium,* eds. Hanne Hartvig-Larsen, David Glen Mick, and Christian Alstead (Copenhagen, 1991).

- The knowledge a company derives from motivational research may help it develop marketing communications that appeal to deep-seated needs and thus provide a more powerful hook to reel in consumers. Even if they are not necessarily valid for all consumers in a target market, these insights can still be valuable to an advertiser who wants to create copy that will resonate with customers.
- Some of the findings seem intuitively plausible after the fact. For example, motivational studies concluded that we associate coffee with companionship, that we avoid prunes because they remind us of old age, and that men fondly equate the first car they owned as an adolescent with the onset of their sexual freedom.

Other interpretations were hard for some researchers to swallow, such as the observation that women equate the act of baking a cake with birth, or that men are reluctant to give blood because they feel it drains their vital fluids. However, we do sometimes say a pregnant woman has "a bun in the oven," and Pillsbury claims that "nothing says lovin' like something from the oven." When the Red Cross hired motivational researcher Dichter to boost blood donation rates, he reported that men (but not women) tended to drastically overestimate the amount of blood they gave. As a result, the Red Cross counteracted men's fear of losing their virility when the organization symbolically equated the act of giving blood with fertilizing a female egg: "Give the gift of life." Despite its drawbacks, some ad agencies today still use some forms of motivational research. The approach is most useful, however, when we use it as an exploratory technique to provide insights that inform more rigorous research approaches.

Neo-Freudian Theories

Freud's work had a huge influence on subsequent theories of personality. Although he opened the door to the realization that explanations for behavior may lurk beneath the surface, many of his colleagues and students felt that an individual's personality is more influenced by how he or she handles relationships with others than by how he or she resolves sexual conflicts. We call these theorists *Neo-Freudian* (meaning following from or being influenced by Freud).

Karen Horney

One of the most prominent neo-Freudians was Karen Horney. This pioneering psychotherapist described people as moving toward others (*compliant*), away from others (*detached*), or against others (*aggressive*).[9] Indeed, one early study found that compliant people are more likely to gravitate toward name-brand products, detached types are more likely to be tea drinkers, and males the researchers classified as aggressive preferred brands with a strong masculine orientation (e.g., Old Spice deodorant).[10] Other well-known neo-Freudians include Alfred Adler, who proposed that a prime motivation is to overcome feelings of inferiority relative to others; and Harry Stack Sullivan, who focused on how personality evolves to reduce anxiety in social relationships.[11]

Carl Jung

Carl Jung was also one of Freud's disciples. However, Jung didn't accept Freud's emphasis on sexual aspects of personality. He went on to develop his own method of psychotherapy that he called *analytical psychology*. Jung believed that the cumulative experiences of past generations shape who we are today. He proposed that we each share a *collective unconscious*, a storehouse of memories we inherit from our

ancestors. For example, Jung would argue that many people are afraid of the dark because their distant ancestors had good reason to fear it. These shared memories create **archetypes**, or universally recognized ideas and behavior patterns. Archetypes involve themes, such as birth, death, or the devil, that appear frequently in myths, stories, and dreams.

Jung's ideas may seem a bit far-fetched, but advertising messages do in fact often include archetypes. For example, some of the archetypes Jung and his followers identified include the "old wise man" and the "earth mother."[12] These images appear frequently in marketing messages that feature characters such as wizards, revered teachers, or even Mother Nature. Our culture's current infatuation with stories such as *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings* speaks to the power of these images—to say nothing of the "wizard" who helps you repair your laptop.

Young & Rubicam (Y&R), a major advertising agency, uses the archetype approach in its BrandAsset® Archetypes model, as depicted in Figure 7.1. The model proposes healthy relationships among archetypes as well as unhealthy ones. A healthy personality is one in which the *Archetypes* overwhelm their corresponding *Shadows*; a sick personality results when one or more Shadows prevail. When a brand's Shadows dominate, this cues the agency to take action to guide the brand to a healthier personality, much as one would try to counsel a psychologically ill person.[13]

A second, similar approach popularized by authors Mark and Pearson uses a typology of 12 brand archetypes. These include categories such as "Hero," "Magician," "Lover," and "Jester." This perspective draws on theories of human motivation to create two sets of contrasts: belonging/people versus independence/self-actualization, and risk/mastery versus stability/control.[14] Table 7.2 (on page 235) summarizes some of these archetype/brand relationships.

Trait Theory

Popular online matchmaking services such as match.com and eharmony.com offer to create your "personality profile" and then hook you up with other members whose profiles are similar. This approach to personality focuses on the quantitative measurement of **personality traits**, which we define as the identifiable characteristics that define a person.

What are some crucial personality traits? Consumer researchers have looked at many to establish linkages to product choice, such as "need for uniqueness," "introversion/extroversion" (whether people are shy or outgoing), and "attention to social comparison information." Some research evidence suggests that ad messages that match how a person thinks about himself or herself are more persuasive.[15]

Another trait relevant to consumer behavior is **frugality**. Frugal people deny short-term purchasing whims; they choose instead to resourcefully use what they already own. For example, this personality type tends to favor cost-saving measures such as limiting time in the shower to save water and bringing leftovers from home to have for lunch at work.[16]

The Big Five Personality Traits

The most widely recognized approach to measuring personality traits is the so-called **Big Five** (also known as the Neo-Personality Inventory). This is a set of five dimensions that form the basis of personality: openness to experience,

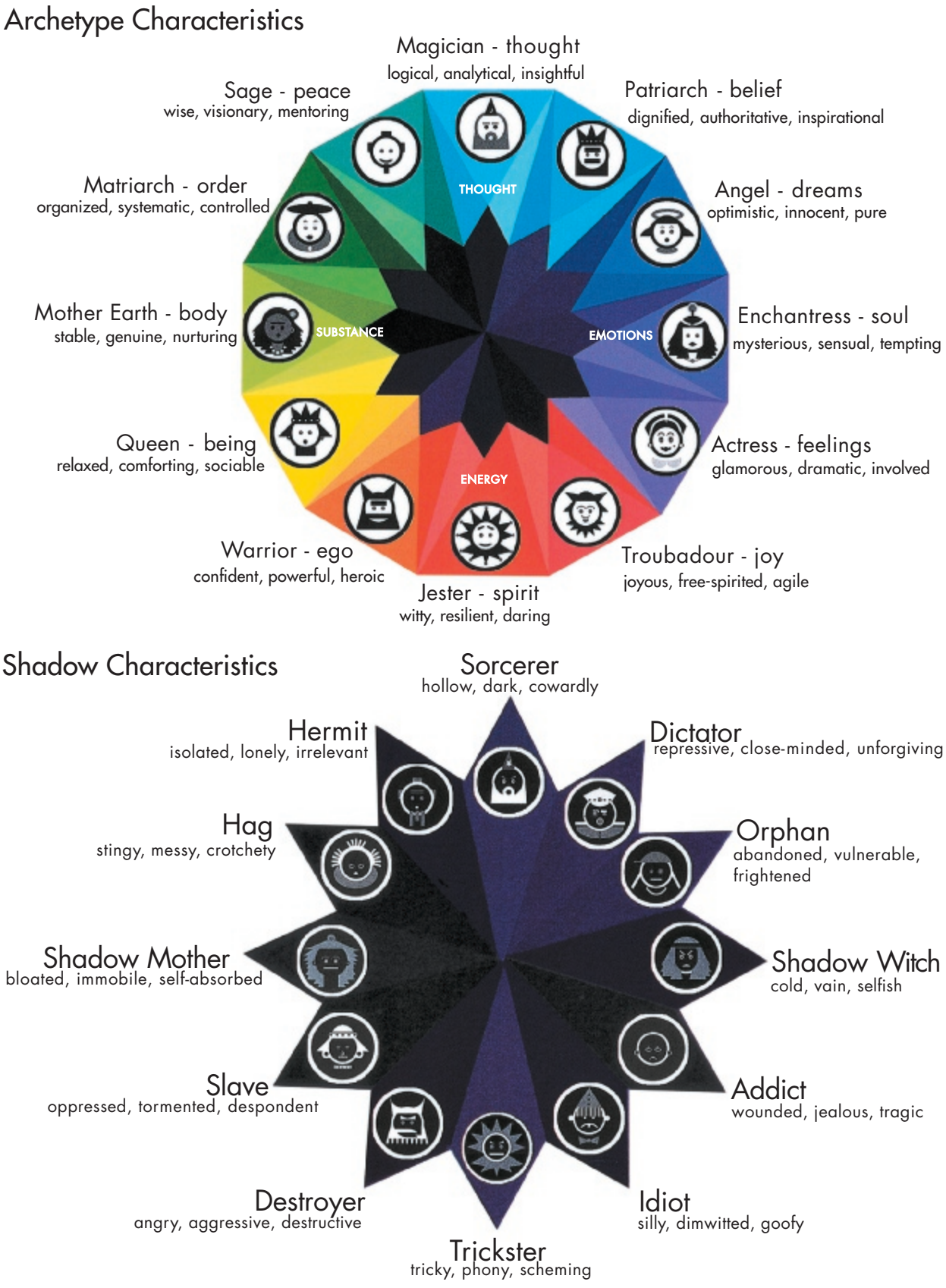


Figure 7.1 BRANDASSET VALUATOR® ARCHETYPES

Source: BrandAsset® Consulting: A Young & Rubicam Brands Company.

TABLE 7.2 Selected Mark and Pearson Brand Archetypes

Archetype	Description	Example brands	As consumers
Leaving a Thumbprint on the World			
"Hero" Core desire: To prove worth through courageous action Goal: Exert mastery in a way that improves the world Fear: Weakness, vulnerability, and wimping out Strategy: Become strong and competent	Everything seems lost . . . but then the Hero rides over the hill and saves the day. The Hero triumphs over evil, adversity, and challenges; in doing so, the Hero inspires others. Heroes are ambitious and seek out challenges. The Hero generally wants to make the world a better place. The hero's motto is: "Where there is a will, there's a way."	Hero brands include: the Marines, the Olympics, the NASA space program, Nike, Red Cross, and Under Armour. Hero movies include: *Star Wars* and *Saving Private Ryan.* Famous Heroes include: Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, John F. Kennedy, and Superman.	Hero consumers expect companies, and indeed brands, to articulate their values, mission, and vision in a clear way. Increasingly, Hero consumers expect those corporate visions to reflect some sense of social responsibility. Heroes evaluate brands and companies not just on the quality of the product or service but also the strengths and ethics of the firm's convictions.
"Lover" Core desire: Attain intimacy and experience sensual pleasure Goal: Being in a relationship with people Fear: Being alone, a wall-flower, unwanted and unloved. Strategy: Become more and more attractive physically, emotionally, and in every other way	The Lover archetype governs all sorts of love, from parental love, to friendship, to spiritual love, but most important is romantic love. The Lover is always active in intense and personal friendships. Lovers think of themselves as being wonderfully appreciative of others. They also typically dislike competition. This can often lead to jealousy and mean-spirited behavior. The Lover's motto is: "I only have eyes for you."	Lover brands include: Coco Chanel, Christian Dior, The Body Shop, Revlon, Godiva, Victoria's Secret, Hallmark, and Häagen Dazs. Lover archetypes in movies include: *Titanic*, *Pretty Woman*, and *Casablanca.* Famous Lover people include: Sofia Vergara, Sophia Loren, Elizabeth Taylor, and George Clooney.	The Lover wants a deeper kind of connection—one that is intimate, genuine, and personal (sometimes also sensual). Lovers often identify products with certain relationships. Lovers develop deep relationships with products and companies, especially those that help them feel special and loved. These types of consumers also like being singled out for attention; for example: "mailing to special customers only."
"Jester" Core desire: To live in the moment with full enjoyment Goal: To have a great time and lighten up the world Fear: Boredom and being boring Strategy: Play, make jokes, and be funny	The Jester archetype includes: the clown, the trickster, and anyone at all who loves to play or act up. While it is possible to have fun on our own, the Jester calls us out to come and play with one another. Jester figures enjoy life and interaction for their own sake. They also love being the life of the party! The Jester's motto is: "If I can't dance, I don't want to be a part of your revolution."	Jester brands include: M&Ms, Snickers, Skittles, Pringles, Coke, Pepsi, and Bud Light. Famous Jester people include: Robin Williams, Johnny Carson, Chris Rock, and Will Smith.	The Jester in every one of us loves humor. Jesters like funny commercials because they entertain them and make them feel good, creating a halo effect around the product. Jester ads and packaging highlight bright colors and lots of action—the more outrageous, the better. Overall, the Jester loves the fun of marketing. They are not frightened by knowing we are in a new time.

Source: Adapted from Michael R. Solomon, Rebekah Russell-Bennett, and Josephine Previte, *Consumer Behaviour: Buying, Having, Being,* 3rd ed., Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Australia, 2012.



Products like these from a German company appeal to people who like to be well-organized.
Source: Courtesy of The Container Store.

conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Table 7.3 describes these dimensions.

The **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®**, which is based on Jung's work, is another widely used personality test. When you apply for a job it is quite possible your potential employer will ask you to take this test. Depending on a respondent's preferences within each of four dimensions as Table 7.4 shows, he or she is assigned to one of 16 four-letter types.[17] Jung believed each of us has "inborn predispositions" along these dimensions that then interact with the environment to shape personality.

The publishers of the Myers-Briggs test also relate these dimensions to social media usage. For example, they report that people who use platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are more likely to be Extroverts, use Intuition, and arrive at decisions by Thinking.[18]

Problems with Trait Theory in Consumer Research

Because consumer researchers categorize large numbers of consumers according to whether they exhibit various traits, we can apply this approach to segment markets. If a car manufacturer, for example, determines that drivers who fit a given trait profile

TABLE 7.3 Description of the Big Five Personality Dimensions

	Description	Example of Measurement Items (agree/disagree)
Openness to experience	The degree to which a person is open to new ways of doing things	Love to think up new ways of doing things
Conscientiousness	The level of organization and structure a person needs	Am always prepared
Extroversion	How well a person tolerates stimulation from people	Talk to a lot of different people at parties
Agreeableness	The degree to which we defer to other people	Take time out for others
Neuroticism (emotional instability)	How well a person copes with stress	Get upset easily

Source: Michael R. Solomon, Rebekah Russell-Bennett, and Josephine Previte, *Consumer Behaviour: Buying, Having, Being*, 3rd ed., Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Australia, 2012.

TABLE 7.4 The Four Dimensions of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®

Focus of attention	Extroversion (E)	Introversion (I)
	External world	Internal world
Take in information	Sensing (S)	Intuition (N)
	Sequential, step-by-step	Big picture
Make decisions	Thinking (T)	Feeling (F)
	Step back from the situation, take an objective view	Step into the situation, take a subjective view
Deal with the outer world	Judging (J)	Perceiving (P)
	A planned approach to meeting the deadline in a scheduled way	A spontaneous approach to meeting the deadline with a rush of activity

Source: Data from Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®).

prefer a car with certain features, it can use this information to great advantage. The notion that consumers buy products that are extensions of their personalities makes intuitive sense. As we'll see shortly, many marketing managers endorse this idea as they try to create *brand personalities* to appeal to different types of consumers.

Unfortunately, the use of standard personality trait measurements to predict product choices has met with mixed success at best. In general, marketing researchers simply have not been able to predict consumers' behaviors on the basis of measured personality traits. These are some logical explanations for these less-than-stellar results:[19]

- Many of the scales are not sufficiently valid or reliable; they do not adequately measure what they are supposed to measure, and their results may not be stable over time.[20,21]

- Psychologists typically develop personality tests for specific populations (e.g., people who are mentally ill); marketers then "borrow" them to apply to a more general population where they have questionable relevance.
- Often marketers don't administer the tests under the appropriate conditions; people who are not properly trained may give them in a classroom or at a kitchen table.
- The researchers often make changes in the instruments to adapt them to their own situations and needs; in the process, they may add or delete items and rename variables. These *ad hoc* changes dilute the validity of the measures and also reduce researchers' ability to compare results across consumer samples.
- Many trait scales measure gross, overall tendencies (e.g., emotional stability or introversion); marketers then use these results to make predictions about purchases of specific brands.

TABLE 7.5 The Influence of Personality Traits on Consumer Behavior

Personality Trait	Influence on Consumer Behavior
Superstition	Sports fan behavior such as "lucky socks," the direction of one's cap on the head, purchase of good luck charms, refusal to purchase particular items because of bad luck (e.g., opals, peacock feathers, apricots)
Pro-environment	Individual recycling efforts, decreased car usage, increased use of public transport
Romanticism	Movie genre choice, more likely to take risks, prefer warm countries to visit, prefer luxury travel
Willingness to spend money	Spendthrifts save less money and carry more debt than tightwads, so they are higher users of credit cards; more likely to buy hedonic items than tightwads
Enjoyment of shopping	People who enjoy shopping are more likely to spend time searching for products, resulting in increased product knowledge
Need for cognition (enjoyment of thinking)	People who enjoy thinking respond better to words than pictures and are more motivated to spend time processing the words and reading the "fine print."
Need for affect (enjoyment of processing feelings)	People who enjoy feelings respond better to pictures than words; more likely to engage in compulsive behavior; pictures may encourage impulse buying
Need for control	The need to *personally* exert control over one's surrounding environment and life outcomes acts as a barrier to new product acceptance. But, framing new products as potentially enhancing one's sense of control increases acceptance of new products by those high in desire for control.
Impulsiveness	More likely to experience pleasure than guilt when overeating
Need for uniqueness	People who want to "stand out from the crowd" tend to be opinion leaders; they are more likely to be sources of information about brands and products for other people
Susceptibility to interpersonal influence (how influenced a person is by another)	A person who is easily influenced by others is more likely to prefer wines that offer social benefits such as prestige
Self-consciousness	People who are concerned with the way they appear to others are less likely to complain directly to a business or in front of others
Extroversion	Extroverts experience more positive emotions when consuming
Neuroticism	Neurotic people are less likely to repurchase or complain (they just leave), regardless of their level of satisfaction

Source: Michael R. Solomon, Rebekah Russell-Bennett, and Josephine Previte, *Consumer Behaviour: Buying, Having, Being*, 3rd ed., Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Australia, 2012.[22]

- In many cases, marketers ask consumers to respond to a large number of scales with no advance thought about how they will relate these measures to consumer behavior. The researchers then use a "shotgun approach" because they follow up on anything that happens to look interesting. As any statistician will tell you, this approach capitalizes on chance and can produce distorted results that may not be reproducible (or surface at all) in other studies.

OBJECTIVE 7-2
Brands have personalities.

Brand Personality

Are Apple users better than the rest of us? Many of us know an "Apple-holic" who likes to turn up his or her nose at the uneducated masses that have to get by with their primitive PCs or Android phones. In fact, a survey of 20,000 people claims that iPad users are unkind and have little empathy; it labels them a "selfish elite." It also described them as "six times more likely to be wealthy, well-educated, power-hungry, over-achieving, sophisticated, unkind and non-altruistic 30- to 50-year-olds. They are self-centered workaholics with an overwhelming interest in business and finance who cherish 'power and achievement' and will not cross the street to help others."[23] Ouch! That's a pretty harsh way to describe people who happen to gravitate toward a successful brand. Do products as well as their owners actually have personalities? Let's step back to explore this intriguing question.

In 1886, a momentous event occurred in marketing history: The Quaker Oats man first appeared on boxes of hot cereal. Quakers had a reputation in 19th-century America for being shrewd but fair, and peddlers sometimes dressed as members of this religious group to cash in on their credibility. When the cereal company decided to "borrow" this imagery for its packages, it hoped customers might make the same association.[24]

Today, thousands of brands also borrow personality traits of individuals or groups to convey an image they want customers to form of them. A **brand personality** is the set of traits people attribute to a product as if it were a person.[25] An advertising agency wrote the following memo to help it figure out how to portray one of its clients. Based on this description of the "client," can you guess who he is? "He is creative . . . unpredictable . . . an imp . . . . He not only walks and talks, but has the ability to sing, blush, wink, and work with little devices like pointers . . . . He can also play musical instruments . . . . His walking motion is characterized as a 'swagger.' . . . He is made of dough and has mass."[26] Of course, we all know today that packaging and other physical cues create a "personality" for a product (in this case, the Pillsbury Doughboy).

It's increasingly common for marketers to think carefully about brand personality as they embrace the communications approach known as **brand storytelling**. This perspective emphasizes the importance of giving a product a rich background to involve customers in its history or experience. Brand storytelling is based on the tradition of **reader-response theory**, which is a widely accepted perspective in literature that focuses on the role of the reader in interpreting a story rather than just relying upon the author's version. This approach recognizes that the consumer does not just want to listen to a manufactured set of details, but he or she wants to participate in the story by "filling in the blanks."[27]

One popular genre of brand storytelling is what a set of researchers described as an **underdog brand biography**. This includes details about a brand's humble origins and how it defied the odds to succeed. Such a story resonates with consumers because they can identify with these struggles. Thus, Google, HP, and Apple like to talk about the garages in which they started. The label on a Nantucket Nectars bottle describes how the company started "with only a blender and a dream."[28]

Marketing Pitfall

Even colleges have brand personalities—though, as with other products, these images aren't always an accurate (or desirable) reflection of the place. About a decade ago, ESPN had to pull the plug on an advertising campaign for its collegiate basketball coverage after managers learned that Anomaly, the advertising agency ESPN had retained for the campaign, intended to recruit actors who would play the stereotypical students at numerous schools. The idea was to have the students stationed at a call center; they would phone consumers to convince them to watch their school play on TV. Here are just a few of the "brand personalities" a leaked memo described:

- Tennessee: "a slutty girl who would hang out at the cowgirl hall of fame."
- Duke: "a smart, with it, young white male. He's handsome. He's from money. He is, in short, the kind of guy everyone can't stand. He is the kind of guy everyone wants to be."
- Oklahoma: "is awesome and he thinks everything is awesome. He's very enthusiastic about all things call center and all things life and he wants to share this contagious enthusiasm with everyone he meets. Wide-eyed, as naive as they come."
- Purdue: "child prodigy. 14-year-old. Or open to an 18-year-old who looks 14. Aeronautical engineering. Wiz kid. Think McLovin from *Superbad*."
- Kansas: "straight off the farm. However, he takes great pains to point out that Kansas is very cosmopolitan, as witnessed by their record, their burgeoning tech industry, and their hybrid corns (bonus: modified by fish genes!)."
- Villanova: "the poor man's Duke—he's not quite as handsome, he's not quite

(Continued)

Marketing Pitfall

as rich, he's not quite as dapper. After 2 or 3 beers though, who cares? . . . he's friendly enough."

- Pittsburgh: "a tomboy. She obviously grew up in the neighborhood and isn't going to take any guff from anyone and she'll wallop you in the eye with a crowbar if you suggest different. So don't. Think Tina Fey type."
- Georgetown: "a 4.36 GPA who's lived in 9 world-class cities, but all the time in her sister's shadow (her GPA is 4.37). She's sort of the female Duke, except most people like her. Think Reese Witherspoon."[29]

Anthropomorphism refers to the tendency to attribute human characteristics to objects or animals. We may think about a cartoon character or mythical creation as if it were a person and even assume that it has human feelings. Again, consider familiar spokescharacters such as Chester Cheetah from Pringles, the Keebler Elves, or the Michelin Man—or the frustration some people feel when they come to believe their computer is smarter than they are or even that it's "conspiring" to make them crazy! As we saw in our discussion of *sex-typed products* in Chapter 6, there is a common tendency in particular to ascribe a gender to a product. We tend to gravitate toward products that are the same as our own gender. In one study, a promotional message that depicted a fragrance, digital camera, and car as either male or female resulted in more positive evaluations when the item's (presumed) gender was the same as the respondent's.[30]



Quaker Oats was one of the first companies to create a distinct personality for its brand.
Source: FoodPhotography/Alamy Stock Photo.

To illustrate how powerful these personalities can be, let's look at a recent study that examined how people who experience social rejection displace their feelings onto a brand. The researchers found that these people are especially drawn to anthropormorphized brands. What's more, when study participants were asked to think about a situation when the isolation from others was their own fault, they were more likely to prefer a (fake) shampoo brand that offered more of a "commitment" than a "fling."

A one-night stand with a shampoo? In the study's relationship condition, subjects read, "Hello, I am Modi, a new member of the L'Oréal family. I look like my family members but I am younger than all of them. Bring me home, and I will always be with you." Then they read a tagline that stressed on the partner role: "Together with a Partner like Me, Enjoy Our Life Forever." In contrast, those who were in the fling condition read the identical advertising message except the last sentence: "Bring me home, and I will be with you tonight," and a tagline that emphasized a fling role: "Try Me, Enjoy Our Moment Tonight."[31] Talk about having a bad hair day.

Many of the most recognizable figures in popular culture are spokescharacters for long-standing brands, such as the Jolly Green Giant, the Keebler Elves, Mr. Peanut, or Charlie the Tuna.[32] These personalities periodically get a makeover to keep their meanings current. For example, Bayer recast Speedy Alka-Seltzer: In the 1950s and later, he was an all-around good guy who was ready to help with any sort of indigestion. Today, he appears as a "wingman" for men in their 20s and 30s who tend to "overindulge" on food and drink. (Do you know anyone who fits this description?) The creative director on the campaign explained that the goal is to introduce Speedy as "the good-times enabler who shows up whenever guys are being guys."[33]

Forging a successful brand personality often is key to building brand loyalty. Marketers who are able to create **brand resonance** cement a bond with the consumer that is very difficult to break.[34] This occurs when a brand truly speaks to some aspect of a consumer's individual life or the culture in which he or she lives. Table 7.6 summarizes some of the types of resonance that accomplish this.

TABLE 7.6 Types of Brand Resonance

Resonance Type	Impact	Brand Example
Interdependency	Facilitates habits, rituals, and routines that entwine the brand's meanings seamlessly into the consumer's everyday life	Starbucks
Intimacy	Has "insiders" who know details of its history, including significant product development particulars, myths about product creators, and obscure "brand trivia" or facts	Nike Air Jordan
Personal co-creation	Encourages consumers to create their own stories about it and how it impacted their lives	Levi Strauss 501s
Emotional vibrancy	Elicits strong emotional reactions such as happiness or excitement	Disney
Cultural bedrock	Links to core cultural values	Apple
Currency value	Evokes a "hot" meaning that defines a major trend in popular culture	Uber
Role resonance	Emblematic of a social role	Birkenstocks
Category resonance	A benchmark customers use to evaluate other brands	Harley-Davidson

Data from Susan G. Fournier, Michael R. Solomon, and Basil G. Englis, "Brand Resonance," in Schmitt, B.H. and D.L. Rogers, eds. (2009), *Handbook on Brand and Experience Management*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 35–57.



Many of the most recognizable figures in popular culture are spokescharacters for long-standing brands.
Source: Franck Fotos/Alamy Stock Photo.

Unfortunately, creating true brand resonance is not as easy to accomplish as it might appear. One reason is that many consumers (particularly younger ones) have a sensitive "BS detector" that alerts them when a brand doesn't live up to its claims or is somehow inauthentic. When this happens, the strategy may backfire as consumers

rebel. They may create websites to attack the brand or post parodies that make fun of it on YouTube. One set of researchers terms this phenomenon a **Doppelgänger brand image** (one that looks like the original but is in fact a critique of it). For example, many consumers were immensely loyal to the Snapple brand until Quaker purchased it. These loyalists felt that Quaker had stripped the brand of its offbeat, grassroots sensibility; one shock jock renamed it "Crapple" on his radio show.[35]

So, how do people think about brands? We use some personality dimensions to compare and contrast the perceived characteristics of brands in various product categories, including these:[36]

- Old-fashioned, wholesome, traditional
- Surprising, lively, "with it"
- Serious, intelligent, efficient
- Glamorous, romantic, sexy
- Rugged, outdoorsy, tough, athletic

Indeed, consumers appear to have little trouble assigning personality qualities to all sorts of inanimate products, from personal care products to more mundane, functional ones—even kitchen appliances. Whirlpool's research showed that people saw its products as more feminine than they saw competing brands. When respondents were asked to imagine the appliance as a person, many of them pictured a modern, family-oriented woman living in the suburbs—attractive but not flashy. In contrast, they envisioned the company's Kitchen Aid brand as a modern professional woman who was glamorous, wealthy, and enjoyed classical music and the theater.[37]

A product that creates and communicates a distinctive brand personality stands out from its competition and inspires years of loyalty. However, personality analysis helps marketers identify a brand's weaknesses that have little to do with its functional qualities: In the brand's earlier days, Adidas asked kids in focus groups to imagine that the brand came to life and was at a party and to tell what they would expect the brand to be doing there. The kids responded that Adidas would be hanging around the keg with its pals, talking about girls. Unfortunately, they also said Nike would *be with* the girls![38] The results reminded Adidas' brand managers that they had some work to do.

Just as we rely on all sorts of cues to infer a human being's personality including facial features, body type, clothing, home decoration, and so on the same is true when we try to figure out brand personality. A product's design is an obvious cue (Apple is "sleek," IKEA is "practical"). Packaging is another, as we saw in Chapter 3: shapes and colors link to meanings.

Another important cue is a brand name: Although Shakespeare wrote "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet," in reality a name does make a difference. That's why you order mahi-mahi instead of dolphin, Chilean sea bass instead of Patagonian toothfish, and you buy dried plums rather than prunes. Companies typically pay professional "namers" up to $75,000 to come up with a good one that makes a memorable statement about brand personality, and of course millions more to put the marketing muscle behind it that makes the name a household word.

Although Steve Jobs came up with Apple (and stuck with it despite a lawsuit from The Beatles) and Sir Richard Branson thought of Virgin, in many cases the naming decision is carefully made by a team of branding experts. When a small carrier called USAir was purchased in the late 1990s, the buyer decided that the name sounded too

A study found that consumers infer strong differences in a wine's "personality" based on the bottle's label design.

Source: Reprinted with permission from *Journal of Marketing*, published by the American Marketing Association, Ulrich R. Orth & Keven Malkewitz, May 2008, Vol. 72, p. 73.

Personality Traits		Low	High
Sincerity	Down-to-earth Honest Wholesome Cheerful		
Excitement	Daring Spirited Imaginative Up-to-date		
Competence	Reliable Intelligent Successful		
Sophistication	Upper class Charming		
Ruggedness	Outdoorsy Tough		

regional. He hired a branding firm to find a new one. The rebranding process took 9 months and was reported to cost almost $40 million. The new name: US Airways.

In a lot of cases, the objective is very simple but also crucial: Break through the clutter and get noticed. Today that sometimes means a name that borders on the vulgar, but it gets our attention. Hapi Food cereal (that offers laxative properties) switched its name to Holy Crap cereal after a customer used that term to describe the product's benefits. You can buy a Kickass Cupcake, and wash it down with wines called Sassy Bitch or Fat Bastard. The HVLS Fan Company (short for high volume, low speed) was moving sluggishly until the owner changed the name to Big Ass Fans.[40]

OBJECTIVE 7-3
A lifestyle defines a pattern of consumption that reflects a person's choices of how to spend his or her time and money, and these choices are essential to define consumer identity.

Lifestyles and Consumer Identity

Are you an **e-sports** fan, or is the idea of getting your kicks by watching *other* people play video games a bit strange? Maybe Amazon knows something you don't; the company paid almost $1 billion to acquire the Twitch website where many of these contests occur.[41] Although still under the radar for many of us, competitive video gaming has become a major "athletic" activity. Millions of people watch e-sports on television. In fact, e-sports already draw more viewers globally than the National Football League's regular season. League of Legends (LoL) currently is the most popular title in e-sports, but leagues based on other games, including Dota 2, Overwatch, and Fortnite are gaining fast. Some e-sport contestants are celebrities with their own fan base and merchandise. The sport is especially hot in South Korea, where a couple is as likely to go on a date to a game club as to the movies. One live tournament there drew 100,000 spectators.[42] Take that, Super Bowl.

Consumers who choose to spend hours watching their heroes play videogames make choices: how to spend their time and how to spend their money. Each of us makes similar choices every day and often two quite similar people in terms of basic



E-sports attract millions of fans around the world.
Source: Eric_Ananmalay / ESPAT Media / Getty Images.

categories such as gender, age, income, and place of residence still prefer to spend their time and money in markedly different ways. We often see this strong variation among students at the same university, even though many of them come from similar backgrounds. A "typical" college student (if there is such a thing) may dress much like his or her friends, hang out in the same places, and like the same foods, yet still indulge a passion for marathon running, stamp collecting, or acid jazz. According to *The Urban Dictionary*, some of the undergraduates at your school may fall into one of these stereotypical categories:[43]

- **Metro:** You just can't walk past a Banana Republic store without making a purchase. You own 20 pairs of shoes, half a dozen pairs of sunglasses, just as many watches, and you carry a man-purse. You see a stylist instead of a barber because barbers don't do highlights. You can make lamb shanks and risotto for dinner and eggs Benedict for breakfast . . . all from scratch. You shave more than just your face. You also exfoliate and moisturize. SNAGs (sensitive new age guys) are similar, but more sensitive. They like to spend time at women's issues rallies.
- **Emo:** Someone into soft-core punk music that integrates high-pitched, overwrought lyrics and inaudible guitar riffs. He or she wears tight wool sweaters, tighter jeans, itchy scarves (even in the summer), ripped chucks with their favorite band's signature, black square-rimmed glasses, and ebony greasy unwashed hair that is required to cover at least three-fifths of the face at an angle. Goths want to kill everyone; Emos want to kill themselves.

In traditional societies, class, caste, village, or family largely dictate a person's consumption options. In a modern consumer society, however, each of us is free (at least within our budgets) to select the set of products, services, and activities that define our self and, in turn, create a social identity we communicate to others. **Lifestyle** defines a pattern of consumption that reflects a person's choices of how to spend his or her time and money. These choices play a key role in defining consumer identity.[44]

Whether Beliebers (fans of Justin Bieber), Little Monsters (fans of Lady Gaga), Claymates (fans of Clay Aiken), or Maggots, Parrotheads, RihannaNavy, Juggalos, Katy-Cats, Swifties, Barbies, Bruce Tramps, Arnold's Army, Whovians, Dead Heads, Big Easy Mafia, or many other groups whose members share a passion for a celebrity or activity, each lifestyle subculture exhibits its own unique set of norms, vocabulary, and product insignias. These subcultures often form around fictional characters and events, and they help to define the extended self (see Chapter 6). Numerous lifestyles thrive on their collective worship of mythical and not-so-mythical worlds and characters from the music group Phish to Hello Kitty.

Marketers also think about lifestyle in terms of how much time we have available to do what we'd like and what we choose to do with that leisure time. According to the latest government data available, for example, Americans ages 20 to 24 on average spend just about 10 hours per day on personal care (including sleep), 4.2 hours working, 0.64 hour purchasing products, about one hour on educational activities, and about 6 minutes on phone calls and email. It's not clear where posting on Instagram fits here![45] Figure 7.2 shows how U.S. consumers more generally allocate their time.

One major change in time usage that shouldn't surprise you: We are spending more time at home due to online shopping, binge-watching on Netflix, and so on. One study reported that in 2012 Americans spent on average 7.8 more days at home than in 2003. A silver lining to this solitary trend: Reduced demand for energy due to less driving![46]

A **lifestyle marketing perspective** recognizes that people sort themselves into groups on the basis of the things they like to do, how they like to spend their leisure

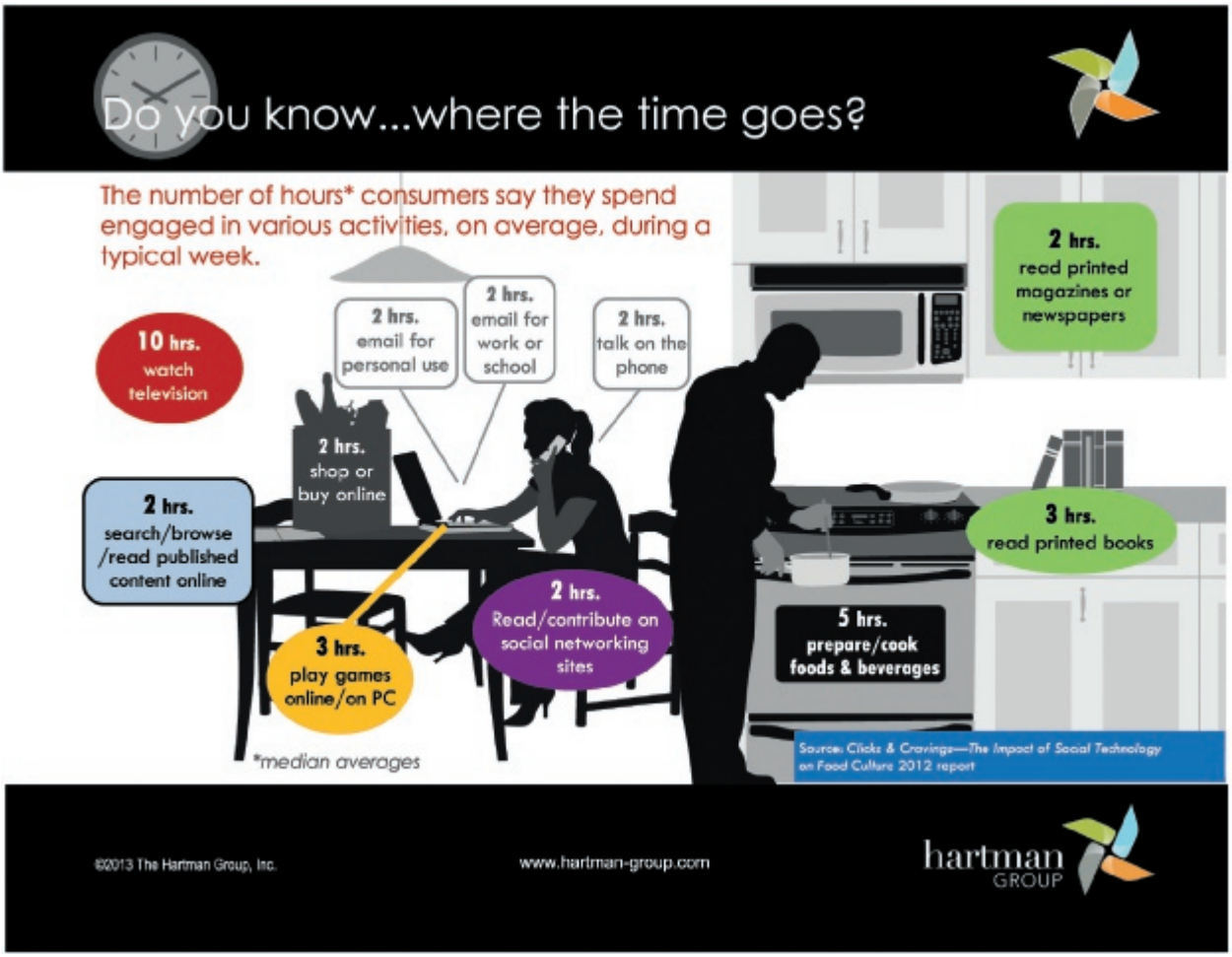


Figure 7.2 HOW U.S. CONSUMERS ALLOCATE THEIR TIME
Courtesy of The Hartman Group, Inc.

time, and how they choose to spend their disposable income.[47] The growing number of niche magazines and websites that cater to specialized interests reflects the spectrum of choices available to us in today's society. The downside of this is obvious to the newspaper industry; several major papers have already had to shut down their print editions because people consume most of their information online.

A lifestyle is much more than how we allocate our discretionary income. It is a statement about who one is in society and who one is not. Group identities, whether of hobbyists, athletes, or drug users, gel around distinctive consumption choices. Social scientists use a number of terms to describe such self-definitions in addition to lifestyle, including *taste public*, *consumer group*, *symbolic community*, and *status culture*.[48]

A goal of lifestyle marketing is to allow consumers to pursue their chosen ways to enjoy their lives and express their social identities. For this reason, a key aspect of this strategy is to focus on people who use products in desirable social settings. The desire to associate a product with a social situation is a long-standing one for advertisers, whether they include the product in a round of golf, a family barbecue, or a night at a glamorous club surrounded by the hip-hop elite.[49] Thus, people, products, and settings combine to express a *consumption style*, as Figure 7.3 diagrams.

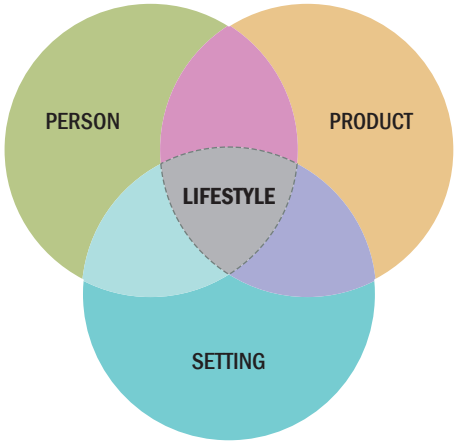


Figure 7.3 CONSUMPTION STYLE

Product Complementarity and Co-Branding Strategies

The designer Ralph Lauren has crafted a classic lifestyle brand that people around the world associate with U.S. taste. He built his Polo empire on an image that evokes country homes and sheepdogs. At the company's elegant flagship store in Manhattan that is a refurbished mansion, one business journalist wrote, "While men who look like lawyers search for your size shirt and ladies who belong at deb parties suggest complementary bags and shoes, you experience the ultimate in lifestyle advertising." Not bad for a guy born in the Bronx to a Jewish housepainter; his original name was Ralph Lifshitz. Now the Lauren empire is expanding beyond clothing, fragrances, and home accessories to restaurants in Paris, Chicago, and New York. You can eat the American Dream while you wear it.[50] Similarly, the luxury sports carmaker Aston Martin is building a luxury condo in Miami, while the furniture and accessories store West Elm is opening boutique hotels.[51]

We get a clearer picture of how people use products to define lifestyles when we see how they make choices in a variety of product categories. A lifestyle marketing perspective implies that we must look at *patterns of behavior* to understand consumers. As one study noted, "All goods carry meaning, but none by itself . . . . The meaning is in the relations between all the goods, just as music is in the relations marked out by the sounds and not in any one note."[52]

Indeed, many products and services do seem to "go together," usually because the same types of people tend to select them. In many cases, products do not seem to "make sense" if companion products don't accompany them (e.g., fast food and paper plates, or a suit and tie) or are incongruous in the presence of other products that have a different personality (e.g., a Chippendale chair in a high-tech office or discount cigarettes paired with a solid gold lighter).

Therefore, an important part of lifestyle marketing is to identify the set of products and services that consumers associate with a specific lifestyle. In fact, research evidence suggests that even a relatively unattractive product becomes more appealing when consumers link it with other products that they do like.[53] Furthermore, when people consume multiple products that are labeled with the same brand they actually like them more: They believe that these items were deliberately developed to go together.[54]

The meshing of objects from many different categories to express a single lifestyle idea is at the heart of many consumption decisions, including coordinating an outfit for a big date (shoes, garments, fragrance, and so on), decorating a room (tables, carpet, wallpaper, and so on), and designing a restaurant (menu, ambience, waitperson uniforms, and so on). Many people today evaluate products not just in terms of function but also in terms of how well their design coordinates with other objects and furnishings. Marketers who understand these cross-category relationships may pursue **co-branding strategies** where they team up with other companies to promote two or more items. Some marketers even match up their spokes-characters in ads; the Pillsbury Doughboy appeared in a commercial with the Sprint Guy to pitch cell phones, the lonely Maytag repairman was in an ad for the Chevrolet Impala, and the Taco Bell Chihuahua (now retired) showed up in a commercial for GEICO insurance.[55]

Product complementarity occurs when the symbolic meanings of different products relate to one another.[56] Consumers use these sets of products we call a **consumption constellation** to define, communicate, and perform social roles.[57] For example, we identified the U.S. "yuppie" of the 1980s by such products as a Rolex watch, a BMW automobile, a Gucci briefcase, a squash racket, fresh pesto, white wine, and brie cheese. Researchers find that even children are adept at creating consumption constellations, and as they get older they tend to include more brands in

these cognitive structures.[58] A constellation perspective is very valuable, because if we know some of a consumer's preferences we can more easily predict what he or she will like in other product categories as well. For example, the music service Spotify now allows music lovers to "shop the look" of their favorite artists by buying makeup straight from the streaming platform.[59] Remember, companies may sell products, but consumers buy identities that are composed of items in many different categories!

Today researchers increasingly turn to huge datasets they obtain from our social media activity to identify consumption constellations. For example, one research team used AI to analyze 50 million images from Google Street View to find out whether the vehicles parked in people's driveways correlate with a neighborhood's voting behavior, income levels, and so on. Sure enough, Republican voting districts are likely to have a heavy concentration of extended-cab pickup trucks, while Democratic districts have sedans. New York is the city that boasts the most expensive cars, while El Paso has the highest percentage of Hummers, and San Francisco has the highest percentage of foreign cars. In terms of the amount of emissions that different models give off, the greenest city in America is Burlington, Vermont, while Casper, Wyoming, has the largest per-capita carbon footprint.[60]

Another study examined the TV shows that people like on Facebook and broke down these preferences by zip code, voting behavior, and other variables.[61] Among the findings:

- The *Duck Dynasty* reality show is most popular in rural areas. The correlation between fandom and the percentage of people who voted for President Trump was the highest for this show. Fans were likely to also follow *Fast n' Loud*, *The Voice*, and *Pawn Stars*, and very unlikely to follow *Game of Thrones*, *South Park*, and *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*.
- *The Daily Show* on Comedy Central is most popular in cities and other more liberal-leaning areas along the coasts. Its highest popularity is in San Francisco, and it's the least popular in Alabama. In contrast to *Duck Dynasty* areas, fans of *The Daily Show* are also likely to follow *Game of Thrones* and *Modern Family*, and very unlikely to watch *16 and Pregnant* or *Teen Mom*.
- Fox's musical-drama series *Empire* tells the story of a hip-hop music company. The show is most popular in "The Black Belt" (a portion of the southern U.S. that includes a higher-than-average percentage of African Americans), but is also a big hit among Native Americans. Fans also like *Love & Hip Hop*, *106 & Park*, and *Real Housewives of Atlanta*. They avoid *MythBusters*, *Deadliest Catch*, and *Pawn Stars*.

OBJECTIVE 7-4
Psychographics go beyond simple demographics to help marketers understand and reach different consumer segments.

Psychographics

When Cadillac introduced its Escalade SUV, critics scoffed at the bizarre pairing of this old-line luxury brand with a truck. However, consumers quickly associated the vehicle with the hip-hop lifestyle. Artists such as Jennifer Lopez, Outkast, and Jay Z referred to it in songs, and Jermaine Dupri proclaimed, "Gotta have me an Escalade." Three years later, Cadillac rolled out its 18-foot Escalade EXT pickup with a sticker price of $50,000.

The Escalade brand manager describes the target customer for luxury pickups as a slightly earthier version of the SUV buyer. She says that although the two drivers may own $2 million homes next door to each other, the typical luxury SUV driver is about 50, has an MBA from Harvard, belongs to a golf club, maintains connections with his college friends, and works hard at keeping up with the Joneses. In contrast, the luxury pickup driver is

roughly five years younger. He might have inherited his father's construction business, and he's been working since he was 18 years old. He may or may not have attended college, and unlike the SUV driver, he is absolutely still connected to his high school friends.[62]

Buyer Personas

Marketers often find it useful to develop products that appeal to different lifestyle subcultures. When marketers combine personality variables with knowledge of lifestyle preferences, they have a powerful lens they can focus on consumer segments. It's common to create a fictional profile of a "core customer" who inspires product design and communications decisions.

Marketers refer to these profiles as **buyer personas**. Essentially you write a "story" about your ideal customer based on market research and real data about your existing customers.[64] The character helps you to connect with the type of person you hope to reach and he or she gives you a more concrete way to think about your customers.





Cadillac developed a luxury SUV and then a luxury pickup to appeal to two distinct psychographic segments.
Source: Evox Productions/Drive Images/Alamy Stock Photo.



Marketers often invent a persona to represent their core customer. Here is a typical one.
Source: Flight Media and ESB Basic/Shutterstock.

For example, Chip Wilson, who founded the popular clothing company Lululemon, relied on a "muse" he made up: A 32-year-old professional single woman named Ocean who makes $100,000 a year. He described Ocean as "engaged, has her own condo, is traveling, fashionable, has an hour and a half to work out a day." This ideal user, according to Wilson, appeals to all women: "If you're 20 years old or you're graduating from university, you can't wait to be that woman. If you're 42 years old with a couple children, you wish you had that time back." Lululemon added a male "muse" when the company moved into menswear: Duke is 35 and an "athletic opportunist" who surfs in the summer and snowboards in the winter. When he got involved in a new company, Kit and Ace, sure enough Wilson helped to come up with two new muses: "Kit, a 29-year-old single woman who 'is looking to buy her first apartment, but is still renting. She works in the creative area, like in graphic design or fashion, and loves to bike on weekends,' and Ace, a 32-year-old similarly groovy guy, who drinks strong coffee, 'likes to go to breweries and hangs out with his friends. He does CrossFit once a week and spins three times a week, loves brunch on the weekends.'"[65] Sound like anyone you know (hint: definitely not your humble author!)?

Psychographics involves the "use of psychological, sociological, and anthropological factors . . . to determine how the market is segmented by the propensity of groups within the market—and their reasons—to make a particular decision about a product, person,

TABLE 7.7 Facebook "Likes" Used in a Psychographic Analysis

Most Open: Tom Waits (musician)	Least Open: *The Hills* (TV show)
A Clockwork Orange (movie)	Luke Bryan (musician)
Most Conscientious: Running (hobby)	Least Conscientious: Bring me the Horizon (rock band)
Private Practice (TV show)	*Minecraft* (game)
Most Extroverted: DJ Pauly D (musician)	Least Extroverted: Nightwish (musician)
Michael Kors (brand)	Video games (hobby)
Most Agreeable: *The Bible*	Least Agreeable: Marilyn Manson (musician)
Rascal Flatts (musician)	Judas Priest (musician)
Most Neurotic: Escape the Fate (musician)	Least Neurotic: *SportsCenter* (TV show)
Placebo (musician)	Miami Heat (basketball team)

Based on Nicole Perlroth and Sheera Frenkel, "The End for Facebook's Security Evangelist," *New York Times* (March 21, 2018).

The Tangled Web

Is psychographics a four-letter word? Lately it seems so, as journalists and others link the term to "dirty tricks" that political campaigns employ. The revelation that the Trump presidential campaign employed a firm to help it persuade voters by illegally accessing their Facebook "likes" was the most prominent misuse of psychographics. The firm allegedly used a model a psychology professor developed that claimed to predict users' personality types based upon the "likes" that more than 50 million users recorded. Given enough data, these profiles were better able to describe a user's personality than were that person's colleagues, friends, or even his or her spouse. Table 7.7 lists some of the "likes" the model identified as linked to personality traits.[63]

ideology, or otherwise hold an attitude or use a medium."[66] Marketers use many psychographic variables to segment consumers, but all of these dimensions go beyond surface characteristics to investigate consumers' motivations for purchasing and using products.

Demographics allow us to describe *who* buys, but psychographics tells us *why* they do. A classic example involves a popular Canadian advertising campaign for Molson Export beer that included insights from psychographic findings. The company's research showed that Molson's target customers tend to be like boys who never grew up, who were uncertain about the future, and who were intimidated by women's newfound freedoms. Accordingly, the ads featured a group of men, "Fred and the boys," whose get-togethers emphasized male companionship, protection against change, and the reassuring message that the beer "keeps on tasting great."[67]

How We Perform a Psychographic Analysis

Psychographic studies take several different forms:

- *A lifestyle profile* looks for items that differentiate between users and nonusers of a product.
- *A product-specific profile* identifies a target group and then profiles these consumers on product-relevant dimensions.
- *A general lifestyle segmentation study* places a large sample of respondents into homogenous groups based on similarities of their overall preferences.
- *A product-specific segmentation study* tailors questions to a product category. For example, if a researcher wants to conduct research for a stomach medicine, she might rephrase the item, "I worry too much" as, "I get stomach problems if I worry too much." This allows her to more finely discriminate among users of competing brands.[68]

AIOs

Most contemporary psychographic research attempts to group consumers according to some combination of three categories of variables: activities, interests, and opinions, which we call **AIOs** for short. Using data from large samples, marketers create profiles of customers who resemble each other in their activities and patterns of product usage.[69] Table 7.8 lists commonly used AIO dimensions.

TABLE 7.8 AIO Dimensions

Activities	Interests	Opinions	Demographics
Work	Family	Themselves	Age
Hobbies	Home	Social issues	Education
Social events	Job	Politics	Income
Vacation	Community	Business	Occupation
Entertainment	Recreation	Economics	Family size
Club membership	Fashion	Education	Dwelling
Community	Food	Products	Geography
Shopping	Media	Future	City size
Sports	Achievements	Culture	Stage in life cycle

Source: William D. Wells and Douglas J. Tigert, "Activities, Interests, and Opinions," *Journal of Advertising Research* 11 (August 1971): 27–35. © 1971 by The Advertising Research Foundation. Used with permission.



The makers of the popular Sigg water bottle, which is available in many designs, actually choose from about 3,000 different concepts each year with specific customers in mind. These include the Whole Foods Woman, who lives in a city, practices yoga, and buys organic produce; and the Geek Chic Guy, who listens to Radiohead and wears vintage Converse sneakers. *Source:* Winston Wong/Alamy Stock Photo.

To group consumers into AIO categories, researchers give respondents a long list of statements and ask them to indicate how much they agree with each one. Thus, we can "boil down" a person's lifestyle by discovering how he or she spends time, what he or she finds interesting and important, and how he or she views himself or herself and the world around him or her.

Typically, the first step in conducting a psychographic analysis is to determine which lifestyle segments yield the bulk of customers for a particular product. This strategy reflects *the 80/20 rule* we first discussed in Chapter 1. This rule reminds us that, in many cases, only one or a few lifestyle segments account for the majority of sales.[70]

Psychographic techniques help marketers to identify their heavy users. Then they can better understand how they relate to the brand and the benefits they derive from it. For instance, marketers at the beginning of the walking-shoe craze assumed that all purchasers were basically burned-out joggers. Subsequent psychographic research showed that there were actually several different groups of "walkers," ranging from those who walk to get to work to those who walk for fun. This realization resulted in shoes that manufacturers aimed at different segments, from Footjoy Joy-Walkers to Nike Healthwalkers.

Marketers use the results of these studies to:

- **Define the target market**—This information allows the marketer to go beyond simple demographic or product usage descriptions (e.g., middle-aged men or frequent users).
- **Create a new view of the market**—Sometimes marketers create their strategies with a "typical" customer in mind. This stereotype may not be correct because the actual customer may not match these assumptions. For example, marketers of a face cream for women were surprised to find that older, widowed women were their heavy users rather than the younger, sociable women to whom they were pitching their appeals.

- **Position the product**—Psychographic information can allow the marketer to emphasize features of the product that fit in with a person's lifestyle.
- **Better communicate product attributes**—The artist or copywriter obtains a much richer mental image of the target consumer than he or she can simply by looking at dry statistics. For example, early research that the Schlitz beer brand conducted found that heavy beer drinkers tended to feel that life's pleasures were few and far between. In response, the brewer developed commercials with the tagline, "You only go around once, so reach for all the gusto you can."[71]
- **Develop product strategy**—Understanding how a product fits, or does not fit, into consumers' lifestyles allows the marketer to identify new product opportunities, chart media strategies, and create environments most consistent and harmonious with these consumption patterns.
- **Market social and political issues**—A psychographic study of men aged 18 to 24 who drink and drive highlights the potential for this perspective to help in the eradication of harmful behaviors. Researchers divided this segment into four groups: "good timers," "well adjusted," "nerds," and "problem kids." They found that one group in particular—"good timers"—was more likely to believe that it is fun to be drunk, that the chances of having an accident while driving drunk are low, and that drinking increases one's appeal to the opposite sex. Because the study showed that this group is also the most likely to drink at rock concerts and parties, is most likely to watch MTV, and tends to listen to album-oriented rock radio stations, reaching "good timers" with a prevention campaign became easier.[72]

Marketers constantly search for new insights so they can identify and reach groups of consumers united by common lifestyles. To meet this need, many research companies and advertising agencies develop their own **lifestyle segmentation typologies**. Respondents answer a battery of questions that allow the researchers to cluster them into a set of distinct lifestyle groups. The questions usually include a mixture of AIOs plus other items relating to feelings about specific brands, favorite celebrities, and media preferences. Companies that want to learn more about their customers and potential customers then buy one or more of these systems for their own use.

The best-known lifestyle segmentation system is the **Values and Lifestyles System (VALS2™)** that SRI International developed. The current VALS2™ system uses a battery of 39 items (35 psychological and 4 demographic) to divide U.S. adults into groups, each with distinctive characteristics. As Figure 7.4 shows, the typology arranges groups vertically by their resources (including such factors as income, education, energy levels, and eagerness to buy) and horizontally by self-orientation.

Three self-orientations constitute the horizontal dimension. Consumers with an *Ideals* orientation rely on a belief system to make purchase decisions, and they are not concerned with the views of others. People with an *Achievement* orientation are more competitive; they take into account what their peers will think about their decisions and how these choices will reflect on them. Finally, those with a *Self-Expression* orientation are more concerned with the emotional aspects of purchases and the satisfaction they will personally receive from products and services.

- **Innovators**—The top VALS2™ group, they are successful consumers with many resources. This group is concerned with social issues and is open to change.

The next three groups also have sufficient resources but differ in their outlooks on life:[73]

- **Thinkers**—They are satisfied, reflective, and comfortable.
- **Achievers**—They are career-oriented and prefer predictability to risk or self-discovery.

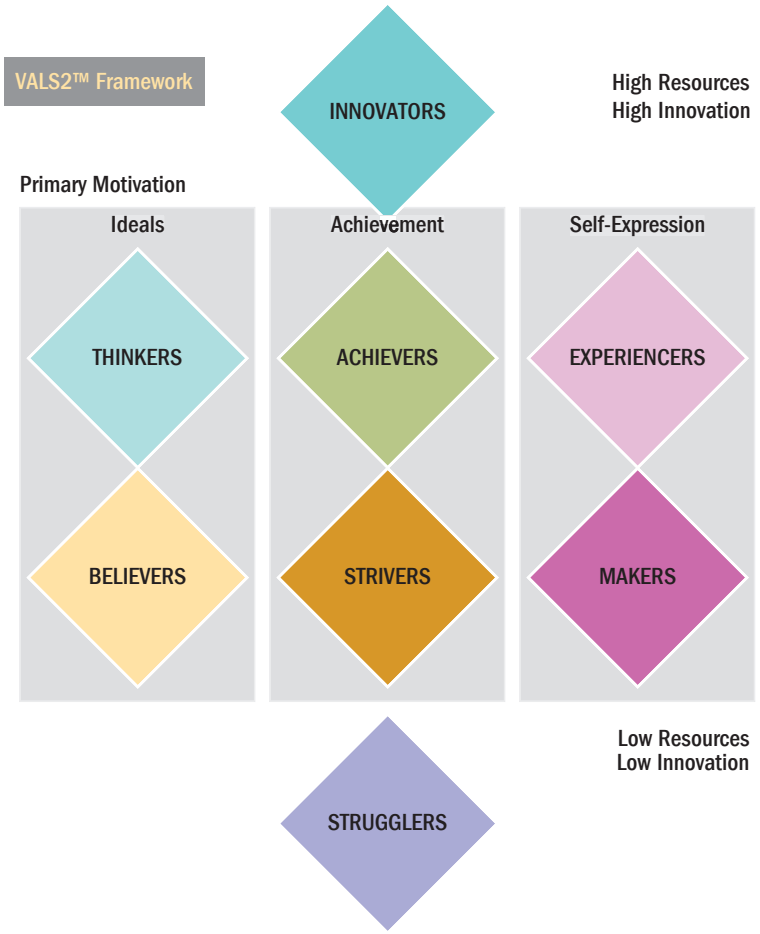


Figure 7.4 VALS2™

- **Experiencers**—They are impulsive, young, and enjoy offbeat or risky experiences.

The next four groups have fewer resources:

- **Believers**—They have strong principles and favor proven brands.
- **Strivers**—They are similar to Achievers but have fewer resources. They are concerned about the approval of others.
- **Makers**—They are action oriented and tend to focus their energies on self-sufficiency. They will often be found working on their cars, canning their own vegetables, or building their own houses.
- **Strugglers**—They are at the bottom of the economic ladder. They are most concerned with meeting the needs of the moment and have limited ability to acquire anything beyond the basic goods they need for survival.

If you want to see what VALS2™ type you are, go to www.strategicbusinessinsights.com/vals/presurvey.shtml.

OBJECTIVE 7-5
Underlying values often drive consumer motivations.

Values

A **value** is a belief that some condition is preferable to its opposite. For example, it's safe to assume that most people prefer freedom to slavery. Others avidly pursue products

and services that will make them look younger rather than older. A person's set of values plays an important role in consumption activities. Consumers purchase many products and services because they believe these products will help to attain a value-related goal.

For example, everyone wants to be clean, but some societies are more fastidious than others and won't accept products and services that they think cut corners. Italian women on average spend 21 hours a week on household chores other than cooking—compared with only 4 hours for Americans, at least according to Procter & Gamble's (P&G) research. The Italian women wash kitchen and bathroom floors at least four times a week, Americans only once. Italian women typically iron nearly all their wash, even socks and sheets, and they buy more cleaning supplies than women elsewhere do.

Because of these traits, they should be ideal customers for cleaning products, right? That's what Unilever thought when it launched its all-purpose Cif spray cleaner there, but it flopped. Similarly, P&G's best-selling Swiffer wet mop bombed big time. Both companies underestimated this market's desire for products that are tough cleaners, not timesavers. Only about 30 percent of Italian households have dishwashers because many women don't trust machines to get dishes as clean as they can get them by hand, manufacturers say. Many of those who do use machines tend to thoroughly rinse the dishes before they load them into the dishwasher. The explanation for this value: After World War II, Italy remained a poor country until well into the 1960s, so labor-saving devices, such as washing machines, which had become popular in wealthy countries, arrived late. Italian women joined the workforce later than many other European women and in smaller numbers. Young Italian women increasingly work outside the home, but they still spend nearly as much time as their mothers did on housework.

When Unilever did research to determine why Italians didn't take to Cif, they found that these women weren't convinced that a mere spray would do the job on tough kitchen grease or that one product would adequately clean different surfaces (it turns out that 72 percent of Italians own more than eight different cleaning products). The company reformulated the product and then reintroduced it with different varieties instead of as an all-in-one. It also made the bottles 50 percent bigger because Italians clean so frequently, and changed its advertising to emphasize the products' cleaning strength rather than convenience. P&G also reintroduced its Swiffer, this time adding beeswax and a Swiffer duster that is now a bestseller. It sold 5 million boxes in the first eight months, twice the company's forecasts.[74]

Two people can believe in and exhibit the same behaviors (e.g., vegetarianism), but their underlying **belief system** may be quite different (e.g., animal activism versus health concerns). The extent to which people share a belief system is a function of individual, social, and cultural forces. Advocates of a belief system often seek out others with similar beliefs so that social networks overlap; as a result, believers tend to be exposed to information that supports their beliefs (e.g., tree-huggers rarely hang out with loggers).[75]

Core Values

The actress Kim Kardashian wasn't pleased when her picture ran on the cover of *Cosmopolitan Turkey*, especially when it was released on the same date that some countries commemorate the alleged Armenian genocide in the last days of the Ottoman Empire. Because *Cosmopolitan* publishes in 64 different countries, it is difficult to be sure readers everywhere experience the content the same way. In addition to political differences, marketers have to be sensitive to cultural values: In some countries, because of local norms about modesty, some female readers have to hide the magazine

from their husbands! Different cultures emphasize varying belief systems that define what it means to be female, feminine, or appealing—and what people consider appropriate to see in print on these matters. Publishers of the Chinese version aren't even permitted to mention sex at all, so they replace articles about uplifting cleavage with uplifting stories about youthful dedication. Ironically, there isn't much down-and-dirty material in the Swedish edition either—but for the opposite reason: The culture is so open about this topic that it doesn't grab readers' attention the way it would in the United States.[76]

In many cases, of course, values are universal. Who does not desire health, wisdom, or world peace? What sets cultures apart is the *relative importance*, or ranking, of these universal values. This set of rankings constitutes a culture's **value system**.[77] For example, one study found that North Americans have more favorable attitudes toward advertising messages that focus on self-reliance, self-improvement, and the achievement of personal goals as opposed to themes stressing family integrity, collective goals, and the feeling of harmony with others. Korean consumers exhibited the reverse pattern.[78]

We characterize every culture in terms of its members' endorsement of a value system. Not every individual will endorse these values equally; in some cases, values may even seem to contradict one another (e.g., U.S. Americans appear to value both conformity and individuality and try to find some accommodation between the two). Nonetheless, it is usually possible to identify a general set of **core values** that uniquely define a culture. For example, core values such as freedom, youthfulness, achievement, materialism, and activity characterize U.S. culture.

Of course, these values certainly evolve over time. Some analysts argue that our focus on acquiring physical objects is shifting a bit toward the consumption of experiences instead. This movement is consistent with research that shows experiential purchases provide greater happiness and satisfaction because they allow us to connect with others and form a bigger part of our social identities. And, as we saw in Chapter 2, increasingly in the United States we find that many consumers value sustainability and reward companies that are environmentally friendly. That helps to explain why the Chipotle restaurant chain is so popular among young consumers. The company promotes sustainable agriculture practices and the humane treatment of animals it uses for meat.[79]

How do we determine what a culture values? We term the process of learning the beliefs and behaviors endorsed by one's own culture **enculturation**. In contrast, we call the process of learning the value system and behaviors of another culture (often a priority for those who wish to understand consumers and markets in foreign countries) **acculturation**. *Socialization agents*, including parents, friends, and teachers, impart these beliefs to us. In one study, for example, the researchers explored the domain of hunting. They described the process by which family members and friends mentor young men as they learn how to hunt. These socialization agents used stories and traditions to guide the men as they moved through the stages of pre-hunter, neophyte, and apprentice, until they finally become competent hunters.[80]

The Value of Materialism: Are You What You Own?

During World War II, members of "cargo cults" in the South Pacific literally worshiped cargo they salvaged from crashed aircraft or that washed ashore from ships. They believed that their ancestors piloted the ships and planes that passed near their islands, so they tried to attract them to their villages. They went so far as to construct fake planes from straw to lure the real ones overhead![81]

We may not worship products to that extent, but many of us certainly work hard to attain our vision of the good life, which abounds in material comforts. Most young

people can't imagine a life without cell phones, music streaming, and other creature comforts. In fact, we can think of marketing as a system that provides certain standards of living to consumers. To some extent, then, the standards of living we expect and desire influence our lifestyles, either by personal experience or as a result of the affluent characters we see on TV in "reality shows" such as *Keeping Up With the Kardashians,* in movies, and in the pages of *Vogue* or *GQ*.[82] Exhibit A: The popular bumper sticker that reads "He Who Dies with the Most Toys Wins."

Our possessions play a central role in our lives, and our desire to accumulate them shapes our value systems. **Materialism** refers to the importance people attach to worldly possessions.[83] We sometimes take the bounty of products and services for granted, until we remember how recent this abundance is. For example, in 1950, two of five U.S. homes did not have a telephone, and in 1940 only half of all households had indoor plumbing.

Materialists are more likely to value possessions for their status and appearance-related meanings, whereas those who do not emphasize this value tend to prize products that connect them to other people or that provide them with pleasure when they use them.[84] As a result, high materialists prefer expensive products that they publicly consume. A study that compared specific items that low versus high materialists value found that people who were non-materialists cherished items with personal significance, such as a mother's wedding gown, picture albums, a rocking chair from childhood, or a garden. In contrast, high materialists preferred prestige goods such as jewelry, china, or a vacation home.[85]

Materialistic people also appear to link more of their self-identity to products. One study found that when people who score high on this value fear the prospect of dying, they form even stronger connections to brands.[86] Another study reported that consumers who are "love-smitten" with their possessions tend to use these relationships to compensate for loneliness and a lack of affiliation with social networks.[87] Yet another found that materialists tend to value a product before they buy it because they believe it will make them happy, but their satisfaction with it diminishes after the purchase when they realize this didn't happen.[88]

Materialism remains a strong value in the U.S., but the types of products that consumers covet is definitely shifting beyond traditional luxury goods and high-profile designer names. It seems that many people now value (or perhaps even obsess about) the inherent qualities of what they buy, whether their purchases are diamonds or organic yogurt. Some prominent marketers are subtly shifting their emphasis from bragging rights and toward providing other benefits to prospective owners. For example, Mercedes-Benz is transforming its S-Class model into a health-driven vehicle. In partnership with Philips, the automaker developed a new "Fit and Healthy" system concept that stresses road safety and comfort rather than status. The car features stress-free routes on the navigation system, scented air to keep the driver alert, seat massages, and lighting that suits the operator's mood.[89]

One important dimension for materialists today is **provenance**: Shoppers are willing to pay more for an item when they know exactly where it comes from, and they are assured that "real people" have thoughtfully selected the things from which they choose. This process of **curation**, which used to refer to an expert who carefully chooses pieces to include in a museum exhibit, now applies to a range of consumer products such as food, clothing, and travel. Whole Foods personalizes its inventory as it features the names of store employees on chalkboards throughout the store and often specifies the farms that grew the products.[90]

Of late one important trend that runs counter to materialism is **minimalism**. This label describes a simple lifestyle, with an emphasis on getting rid of things you don't need. Minimalists try to lead a simple life with the least amount of possessions they

need.[91] Some take a vow to stop shopping for an extended period, and others give away much of what they own.

The quest for simplicity also has ignited the **Tiny House Movement**, where home buyers downscale their lives (and their mortgage payments) by moving into houses that range from only 100 to 400 square feet (the average "normal" house is about 2,600 square feet). A few hardy souls even commit to **living off the grid**, without access to creature comforts such as electricity and indoor plumbing.[92] Many others don't go quite that far, but they work hard to declutter their homes by vigorously cleaning out closets, mending or recycling old clothes, and making sure that their "stuff" is neatly stored. **Decluttering** has become an obsession for many, and an art form that followers revere for its Zen-like flavor.[93]

As we've seen, *values* are general ideas about good and bad goals. From these flow *norms*, or rules that dictate what is right or wrong, acceptable, or unacceptable. We explicitly decide on *enacted norms*, such as the rule that a green traffic light means "go" and a red one means "stop." Many norms, however, are much more subtle. We discover these **crescive norms** as we interact with others. The following are all types of crescive norms:[94]

- A **custom** is a norm that controls basic behaviors, such as division of labor in a household or how we practice particular ceremonies.
- A **more** ("mor-ay") is a custom with a strong moral overtone. It often involves a *taboo*, or forbidden behavior, such as incest or cannibalism. Violation of a more often meets with strong sanctions. In Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, people consider it sacrilege to display underwear on store mannequins or to feature a woman's body in advertising, so retailers have to tread lightly; one lingerie store designed special headless and legless mannequins with only the slightest hint of curves to display its products.[95]
- A **convention** is a norm that regulates how we conduct our everyday lives. These rules often deal with the subtleties of consumer behavior, including the "correct" way to furnish your house, wear your clothes, or host a dinner party. The Chinese government tried to change citizens' conventions when the country geared up for the Olympics in Beijing: Local habits were at odds with what planners knew



A "tiny house."
Source: Alexander Tolstykh/Alamy Stock Photo.

foreign visitors expected to encounter. For one, it's common to spit on the sidewalk; the sinus-clearing, phlegmy hawking sound is so common that one foreigner dubbed it "the national anthem of China." In addition to the extensive cleanup the government conducted (it even restricted city traffic to reduce smog levels), it imposed a hefty fine for public spitting to get people accustomed to holding in their saliva before hordes of fans descended on the city.[96]

All three types of crescive norms may jointly define a culturally appropriate behavior. For example, a more may tell us what kind of food it's okay to eat. These norms vary across cultures, so a meal of dog is taboo in the United States, Hindus shun steak, and Muslims avoid pork products. A custom dictates the appropriate hour at which we should serve the meal. Conventions tell us how to eat the meal, including such details as the utensils we use, table etiquette, and even the appropriate apparel to wear at dinnertime. We often take these conventions for granted. We just assume that they are the "right" things to do (again, until we travel to a foreign country!). Much of what we know about these norms we learn *vicariously* as we observe the behaviors of actors in television commercials, sitcoms, print ads, and other media. That reminds us why the marketing system is such an important element of culture.



An etiquette class is one form of socialization agent that teaches people about their culture's values and how to act "appropriately" in different settings.
Source: John Robertson/Alamy Stock Photo.

How Do Values Link to Consumer Behavior?

Despite their importance, values haven't helped us to understand consumer behavior as much as we might expect. One reason is that broad-based concepts such as freedom, security, or inner harmony are more likely to affect general purchasing patterns than to differentiate between brands within a product category. This is why some researchers distinguish among broad-based *cultural values* such as security or happiness, *consumption-specific values* such as convenient shopping or prompt service, and *product-specific values* such as ease of use or durability, which affect the relative importance people in different cultures place on possessions.[97]

We can observe one direct connection between a value and consumption in the U.S., where unfortunately concerns about injury or death from gun violence have sparked an intense national debate. One consequence: Analysts project that sales of body armor to Americans will reach $5.77 billion in about five years. As a culture of fear is perpetuated by gun attacks and violence in the U.S., high-end brands are stepping in to give people peace of mind through high quality, undetectable bulletproof clothing. Designers offer upscale bulletproof clothing in the form of suits and jackets that look like regular apparel.[98] Some aspects of brand image, such as sophistication, tend to be common across cultures, but others are more likely to be relevant in specific places. The Japanese tend to value peacefulness, whereas Spaniards emphasize passion, and the value of ruggedness appeals to Americans.[99] Because values drive much

of consumer behavior (at least in a general sense), we might say that virtually *all* consumer research ultimately relates to identifying and measuring values. Let's briefly describe some specific attempts by researchers to measure cultural values and apply this knowledge to marketing strategy.

The Rokeach Value Survey

The psychologist Milton Rokeach identified a set of **terminal values**, or desired end states, that apply to many different cultures. The *Rokeach Value Survey* also includes a set of **instrumental values**; actions we need to take to achieve these terminal values.[100]

Some evidence indicates that differences in these global values do translate into product-specific preferences and differences in media usage. Nonetheless, marketing researchers have not widely used the Rokeach Value Survey.[101] One reason is that our society is evolving into smaller and smaller sets of *consumption microcultures* within a larger culture, each with its own set of core values (more on this in Chapter 13). For example, in the United States, a sizable number of people are strong believers in natural health practices and alternative medicine. This focus on wellness instead of mainstream medical approaches to sickness influences many of their behaviors, from food choices to the use of alternative medical practitioners, as well as their opinions on political and social issues.[102]



A world of beauty is a terminal value in Rokeach's Value Survey.
Source: yanikap/Shutterstock.

The List of Values (LOV)

The **List of Values (LOV) scale** isolates values with more direct marketing applications. This instrument identifies nine consumer segments based on the values members endorse and relates each value to differences in consumption behaviors. These segments include consumers who place priorities on such values as a sense of belonging, excitement, warm relationships with others, and security. For example, people who endorse the sense-of-belonging value are older, are more likely to read *Reader's Digest* and *TV Guide*, drink and entertain more, and prefer group activities more than people who do not endorse this value as highly. In contrast, those who endorse the value of excitement are younger and prefer *Rolling Stone* magazine.[103]

The Means–End Chain Model

The **means–end chain model** assumes that people link specific product attributes (indirectly) to terminal values: We choose among alternative means to attain some end state that we value (such as freedom or safety). Thus, we value products to the extent that they provide the means to some end we desire. A technique researchers call **laddering** uncovers consumers' associations between specific attributes and these general consequences. Using this approach, they help consumers climb up the "ladder" of abstraction that connects functional product attributes with desired end states.[104] Based on consumer feedback, they then create *hierarchical value maps* that show how specific product attributes get linked to end states.

Syndicated Surveys

A number of companies track changes in values through large-scale surveys. They sell the results of these studies to marketers, who receive regular updates on changes and trends. This approach originated in the mid-1960s, when Playtex was concerned about sagging girdle sales (pun intended). The company commissioned the market research firm of Yankelovich, Skelly & White to see why sales had dropped. Their research linked the decline to a shift in values regarding appearance and naturalness. Playtex went on to design lighter, less restrictive garments, while Yankelovich went on to track the impact of these types of changes in a range of industries. Gradually, the firm developed the idea of one big study to track U.S. attitudes. In 1970, it introduced the Yankelovich *Monitor*™, which is based on 2-hour interviews with 4,000 respondents.[105]

Today, many other syndicated surveys also track changes in values. Advertising agencies perform some of these so that they can stay on top of important cultural trends and help shape the messages they craft for clients. These services include the VALS2™ survey we discussed, GlobalScan (operated by the advertising agency Backer Spielvogel Bates), New Wave (the Ogilvy & Mather advertising agency), and the Lifestyles Study conducted by the DDB World Communications Group.

MyLab Marketing

Visit www.pearson.com/mylab/marketing for Marketing Metrics questions available only in MyLab Marketing.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. **A consumer's personality influences the way he or she responds to marketing stimuli, but efforts to use this information in marketing contexts meet with mixed results.**

   The concept of personality refers to a person's unique psychological makeup and how it consistently influences the way a person responds to his or her environment. Marketing strategies based on personality differences have met with mixed success, partly because of the way researchers have measured and applied these differences in personality traits to consumption contexts. Some analysts try to understand underlying differences in small samples of consumers by employing techniques based on Freudian psychology and variations of this perspective, whereas others have tried to assess these dimensions more objectively in large samples using sophisticated, quantitative techniques.

2. **Brands have personalities.**

   A brand personality is the set of traits people attribute to a product as if it were a person. Consumers assign personality qualities to all sorts of inanimate products. Like our relationships with other people, these designations can change over time; therefore, marketers need to be vigilant about maintaining the brand personality they want consumers to perceive. Forging a desirable brand personality often is key to building brand loyalty.

3. **A lifestyle defines a pattern of consumption that reflects a person's choices of how to spend his or her time and money, and these choices are essential to define consumer identity.**

   A consumer's *lifestyle* refers to the ways he or she chooses to spend time and money and how his or her consumption choices reflect these values and tastes. Lifestyle research is useful for tracking societal consumption preferences and also for positioning specific products and services to different segments. Marketers segment based on lifestyle differences; they often group consumers in terms of their AIOs (activities, interests, and opinions). We associate interrelated sets of products and activities with social roles to form *consumption constellations*. People often purchase a product or service because they associate it with a constellation that, in turn, they link to a lifestyle they find desirable. *Geodemography* involves a set of techniques that use geographical and demographic data to identify clusters of consumers with similar psychographic characteristics.

4. **Psychographics go beyond simple demographics to help marketers understand and reach different consumer segments.**

   Psychographic techniques classify consumers in terms of psychological, subjective variables in addition to observable characteristics (demographics). Marketers have developed systems to identify consumer "types" and to differentiate them in terms of their brand or product preferences, media usage, leisure time activities, and attitudes toward broad issues such as politics and religion.

5. **Underlying values often drive consumer motivations.**

   Products take on meaning because a person thinks the products will help him or her to achieve some goal that is linked to a value, such as individuality or freedom. A set of core values characterizes each culture, to which most of its members adhere.

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REVIEW

7-1 How does Freud's work on the unconscious mind relate to marketing practice?

7-2 Core values evolve over time. What do you think are the three to five core values that best describe Americans today?

7-3 What is the basic philosophy behind a lifestyle marketing strategy?

7-4 How can marketers stay on top of changes in lifestyle trends?

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

7-5 One way to clearly see the impact of shifting cultural values on consumption is to look at the increasing emphasis on the importance of health and wellness. In recent years, top-performing new food/beverage products featured items with natural or organic ingredients, such as Chobani yogurt and Nature's Pride bread.[106] Where is this trend going—is it just temporary or does it reflect a more permanent change in how Americans look at what they eat and drink?

7-6 Is there such a thing as personality? If so, how might you integrate knowledge about consumers' personality traits into a marketing strategy?

7-7 The Great Recession is over, so things are looking up for many consumers. Still, is frugality the "new normal" or have many of us reverted to the free-spending days like before the bubble burst in 2008?

7-8 Is it accurate to claim that sustainability is now a core value for Americans? Why or why not?

7-9 The chapter discusses how Facebook data has been illegally used to develop consumer profiles that can help organizations to tailor messages that will appeal to them. Do improper uses of data as well as data breaches that make us vulnerable to hackers merit additional regulation of social media by government agencies (that might themselves make use of these data for "security" purposes)? What is the proper tradeoff between freedom of information and consumers' privacy?

▶ APPLY

7-10 Identify some of your favorite brands. If each "came to life" as a person, what kind of person would he or she be? Describe the brand personality of each—on what basis do you infer these traits?

7-11 Interview a set of consumers about their favorite brands; things they "can't live without." Based upon the discussion of brand resonance in the chapter, see if you can identify the type of attachment that's operating for each consumer-brand connection.

7-12 Using media that target college students, construct a consumption constellation for this social role. What set of products, activities, and interests tend to appear in advertisements depicting "typical" college students? How realistic is this constellation?

7-13 Extreme sports. YouTube. Pinterest. Veganism. Can you predict what will be "hot" in the near future? Identify a lifestyle trend that is just surfacing in your universe. Describe this trend in detail, and justify your prediction. What specific styles or products relate to this trend?

CASE STUDY

Beyoncé's Beyhive—Honeybees and Killer Bees in Love with Their Queen

Are you in the Beyhive? Diehard Beyoncé fans all over the world proudly claim membership in this group. They represent one of the most dedicated fan bases anywhere. The passion that they have for their favorite pop star has helped build an empire but has also led to some ugly encounters on social media.

Beyoncé Knowles became famous as part of the '90/00s R&B group Destiny's Child. In 2003, she launched as a solo artist, beginning a wildly successful career in both music and business. To date she has earned 22 Grammys and she has been featured in several movies and numerous TV shows.[107,108] *Lemonade* was the highest selling album the year it was released and it has sold over 2.5 million copies.[109] In addition to her music and concert sales, she has leveraged her fame for lucrative celebrity endorsements with L'Oréal, Pepsi, Tommy Hilfiger, McDonald's, Samsung, American Express, Nintendo, H&M, Toyota, and others.[110]

An early foray into fashion, Deréon & Deréon, was unsuccessful, but her latest, Ivy Park, is a big success. Ivy Park is an "athleisure" clothing line, appropriate for Beyoncé who is known for her extensive workout regimen. The label includes running shorts, tank tops, and hoodies, and was launched with an inspirational video about the virtues of self-discipline, which the star narrated.[111] The week it launched, Ivy Park was the top-selling brand at Nordstrom.[112]

Other ventures include WTRMLN WTR, cold-pressed watermelon juice that the singer drinks while on tour, available for $40 for a 12-pack.[113] She has also invested in 22 Days Nutrition, a vegan diet company, and in Tidal, an artist-owned music streaming company.[114] These music, endorsement, and business ventures helped put her at number 38 on Forbes' list of America's Richest Entrepreneurs Under 40, with a net worth of $290 million.[115]

Like any good celebrity, Beyoncé gives credit to her fans. And her fans are particularly passionate. Known as the Beyhive (pronounced "beehive"), this group is both the promoter and defender of all all things Beyoncé. The grassroots movement even has its own taxonomy, with Worker Bees who serve as amateur journalists, Honey Bees who focus on praising the artist, and Yellowjackets, the seasonal Beyoncé fans (that hard-core fans disdain). But most dangerous are the Killer Bees, who attack online anyone who dares to diss the Queen Bee.[116] Saturday Night Live spoofed this fan passion in their sketch The Beygency (www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue =3&v=rGxe83lXgJg).

The Beyhive lives on the internet in a series of forums and social media sites. On these sites, fans can share what they love about Beyoncé, photos of concerts or artist "sightings," and rumors about upcoming events or albums. But they also use the internet to put down anyone who is perceived to have said something negative about their queen. Targets of this ire have included journalist Piers Morgan, rapper Azealia Banks, and talk show host Wendy Williams.[117] When fashion designer Rachel Roy was suspected of having an affair with Beyoncé's husband JayZ, the unfortunate result was an attack on Food Network star Rachel Ray. "Oh I loved hot chicken fajitas but I will never make them again after what you did you did to the Queen," wrote one member of the hive.[118]

This level of passion may be connected to the personal nature of Beyoncé's music, much of which focuses on empowering women and helping them to feel fearless. This deep connection can be uplifting, especially if you feel marginalized, but it can also breed an extreme kind of loyalty. "[A fan] might take an attack on Beyoncé as being an attack on them," says Alice Marwick, an assistant professor of communications and media studies at Fordham University. "They're going to play out that identity by coming to her defense."[119]

From a marketing standpoint, this fanaticism (we get the word fan from "fanatic") can be highly beneficial. Many consumers will express their feelings for a brand in terms of love, and this is easier to do when the brand is a person. That strong feeling enables a transfer of the feelings about one product to another the brand offers. An analysis of Ivy Park clothing sales at Nordstrom showed that about 40 percent of the people who bought at least one item from the new clothing line had also purchased Beyoncé's music, with about 25 percent of those having purchased *Lemonade*.[120] Effective marketing messages create a logical tie between products. WTRMLN WTR is made from bruised or misshapen watermelons, echoing Beyoncé's motif on *Lemonade* (making lemonade from life's lemons).

As you learned in Chapter 6 and in this chapter, fan groups serve as a subculture that can help to define the extended self, making a statement about who one is in society and who one is not. Beyoncé's Beyhive is a strong example of this and will undoubtedly continue to create buzz on social media, helping to propel the artist to even greater levels of artistic and business success.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 7-1 Discuss how Beyoncé fans—the Beyhive—connect with your understanding of the role of consumer identity and lifestyle marketing. Are there particular personality or lifestyle characteristics that members of the Beyhive share?

CS 7-2 Describe Beyoncé's brand personality. How does it compare with other celebrity brand personalities with which you're familiar?

CS 7-3 What kind of opportunities does the existence of the Beyhive community present to marketers? Consider not only products that Beyoncé might offer, but also the many that she could endorse. Develop a list of specific marketing and promotional tactics they might use to reach this target market.

CS 7-4 Could the fanaticism of the most enthusiastic fans of Beyoncé cause other fans on the Beyoncé fan spectrum to be less public about their support? How could a celebrity and his or her marketing team deal with this conundrum?

MyLab Marketing

If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

7-14 Collect a sample of ads that appeal to consumers' values. What value is being communicated in each ad, and how is this done? Is this an effective approach to designing a marketing communication?

7-15 Identify three distinct "taste cultures" within your school. Can you generate a "consumption constellation" for each (clothing, music, leisure activities, etc.)?

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Section 2 Data Case

Evolving Trends in Fitness and French Fries

Background and Goal

Your close friend has finally saved up enough money to open up his dream business—a fitness gym! He hopes to one day turn his gym into a national chain, but for now he plans on opening just two locations in the large U.S. city where he lives. He recently read a news article about how fitness trends in his city are consistent with overall trends in the United States, so he asked you to do a little research about fitness membership trends in the nation. In addition, he asked you to look up membership trends for three likely competitors: Planet Fitness, LA Fitness, and 24 Hour Fitness. In addition, your friend has noted that some recent trends for gyms have included some rather curious practices, like giving away free pizza and candy to its members! He is wondering if you may be able to provide some insight, even if indirect, about such trends and how they may apply to his new gym.

You used GfK MRI's data to find information about U.S. adult gym membership trends in 2015 and 2017. Your plan is to use the two different time points to make some inferences about where the future of fitness gym marketing may be heading. In addition, you also found historical trends about U.S. adult spending at fast-food restaurants. Although not exactly the same as free pizza at gyms, you decided to look at the data to consider whether you can glean any insights. You also found some information about the types of cable channels, websites, and apps fitness consumers use; you plan on using this information to give some advice to your friend about how to advertise for his new gym.

The Data

The data in the report are all reported in the millions (000,000s) and interpreted in a similar way:

- "Bought Fast Food" and "Spent More than $100 on FF": Both questions deal with someone's fast-food consumption in the past six months from either Spring 2017 or Spring 2015. The first question is a simple count of whether someone spent any money on fast food, whereas the second question estimates the number of people who spent more than $100 on fast food in the past six months.
- "Member of Gym": This question is an estimate of U.S. adults who have had a membership in any sort of fitness gym in the last 12 months from either Spring 2017 or Spring 2015. This number includes any gym, not just 24 Hour Fitness, Planet Fitness, and LA Fitness.
- "LA Fitness", "24 Hour Fitness", and "Planet Fitness": These questions are the estimated count of U.S. adults who had a membership to the gym within the last 12 months from either Spring 2017 or Spring 2015.

	Bought Fast Food		Spent More Than $100 on FF		Member of Gym		LA Fitness		Planet Fitness		24 Hour Fitness	
	2015	2017	2015	2017	2015	2017	2015	2017	2015	2017	2015	2017
All	217.7	223.9	43.0	27.2	53.8	56.8	4.3	5.5	5.9	6.7	4.7	4.0
HHI <$40,000	66.9	64.3	8.4	5.3	10.0	8.8	0.7	0.8	1.5	1.6	0.8	0.6
HHI $40,000–$74,999	59.7	57.6	12.2	6.7	14.0	13.4	1.1	1.2	1.9	1.7	1.3	0.9
HH $75,000+	91.1	102.0	22.5	15.1	29.8	34.6	2.6	3.6	2.6	3.4	2.6	2.5
Men	105.2	107.0	23.2	15.2	26.9	27.8	2.3	3.3	3.3	2.9	2.9	2.0
Women	112.5	116.9	19.8	11.9	26.9	29.0	2.0	2.2	2.7	3.7	1.9	2.0

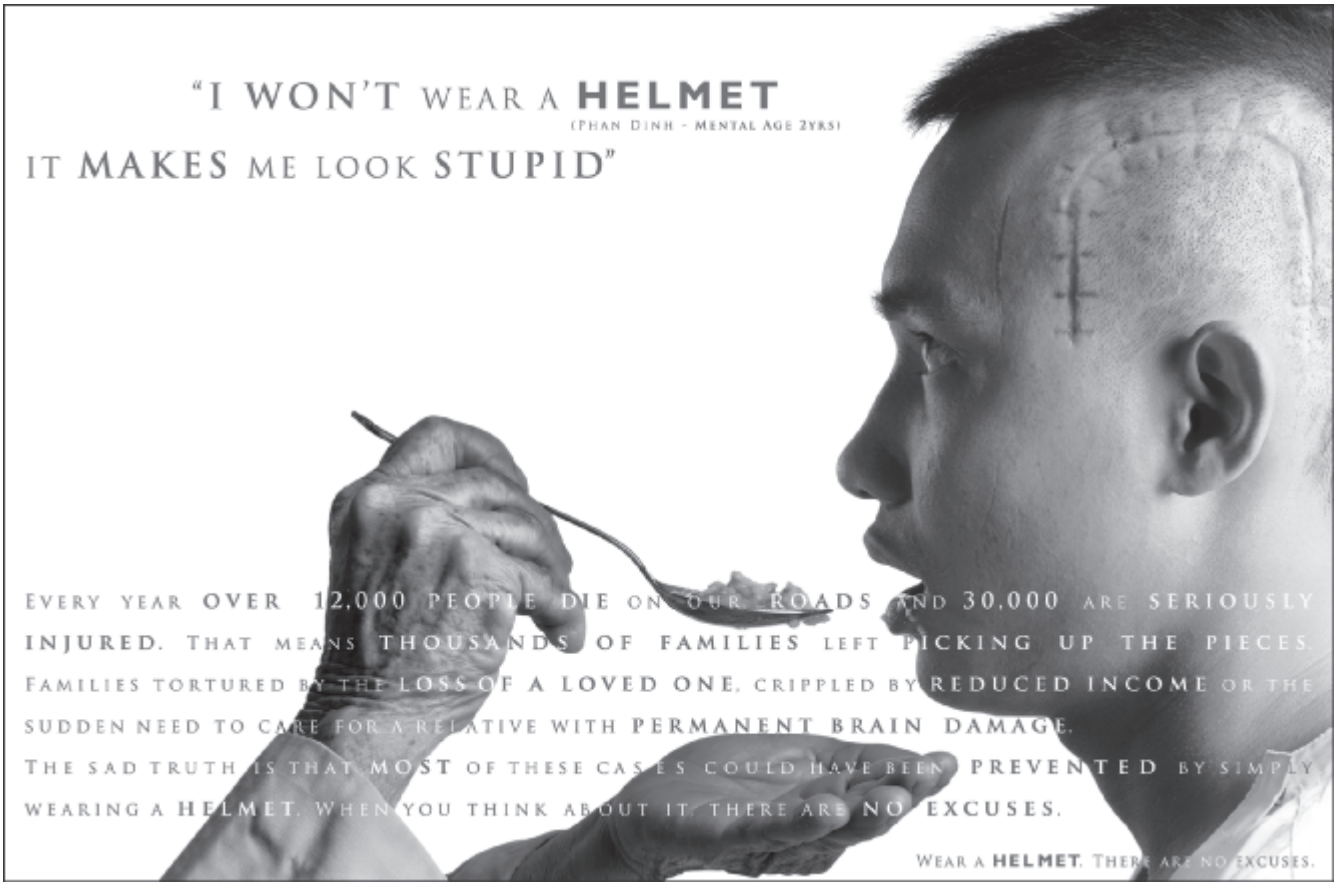
All numbers reported in millions (000,000s)
Source: Spring 2015 and Spring 2017 GfK MRI

- Which of the three income groups had the largest increase in gym membership from 2015 to 2017? If this was expressed in terms of percentage increase, which income group experienced the largest increase from 2015 to 2017?
- Which of the three gyms had the largest market share in 2015? In 2017?
- From 2015 to 2017, does it appear that LA Fitness, 24 Hour Fitness, and Planet Fitness comprise a greater or lesser share of the total gym membership market? Why?

▶ DISCUSSION

1. Compare the membership trends among LA Fitness, 24 Hour Fitness, and Planet Fitness. Are membership trends similar or different across genders and income groups? Consider the different marketing mixes of the three gyms; what do you think may account for the differences in membership trends? (Tip: You can use a tool like *Google News* to search for news articles about each gym in 2015 or 2017.)
2. Your friend told you that he envisions his gym being a place where people who are "intimidated" about going to the gym will feel safe and empowered to work out. Assuming this aspect of your friend's gym is going to be part of his positioning, which of the three competing gyms would you consider to be his most serious competitor? Why?
3. Which income group has experienced the greatest increase in fast food spending from 2015 to 2017? Do you think this information is relevant for your friend when thinking about the marketing mix of his gym? Why or why not?

GfK US LLC, Mediamark Research & Intelligence division.


"I WON'T WEAR A HELMET
(PHAN DINH - MENTAL AGE 2YRS)
IT MAKES ME LOOK STUPID"
EVERY YEAR OVER 12,000 PEOPLE DIE ON OUR ROADS AND 30,000 ARE SERIOUSLY INJURED. THAT MEANS THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES LEFT PICKING UP THE PIECES. FAMILIES TORTURED BY THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE, CRIPPLED BY REDUCED INCOME OR THE SUDDEN NEED TO CARE FOR A RELATIVE WITH PERMANENT BRAIN DAMAGE.
THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT MOST OF THESE CASES COULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED BY SIMPLY WEARING A HELMET. WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THERE ARE NO EXCUSES.
WEAR A HELMET. THERE ARE NO EXCUSES.

Section 3

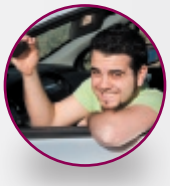
Choosing and Using Products

In Section 3 we look at how consumers think about products, the steps we use to choose one, and what happens after we buy something. Chapter 8 focuses on how we form feelings and thoughts about products and how marketers influence us. In Chapter 9 we look at the steps we use to identify the best solution to a consumption problem. Chapter 10 highlights how factors at the time of purchase influence our choices and then what happens after we buy.

Chapters Ahead



Chapter 8
Attitudes and Persuasive Communications



Chapter 10
Buying, Using, and Disposing



Chapter 9
Decision Making

8

Attitudes and Persuasive Communications

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why:

8-1 It is important for consumer researchers to understand the nature and power of attitudes.

8-2 We form attitudes in several ways.

8-3 Persuasion involves an active attempt to change attitudes.



Source: Peathegee Inc/Blend Images/Getty Images.

Saundra is hanging out at the mall, idly texting some friends about some stuff she saw in a few stores. When she checks her Facebook page, she sees several friends are chatting about their college application plans. She groans to herself; it's starting already! She's just starting her senior year of high school, and already everybody's thinking about what happens next year. Saundra realizes it's time to bite the bullet and really start to look into this; her Mom will certainly be happy. But it's all so confusing. She's been getting bombarded with enticing ads and brochures from so many different schools. They're hard to escape; some arrive by snail mail and others keep hitting her with emails and texts. A few have invited her to take virtual campus tours on their websites, and one even wants her to enter a virtual world version of the campus as an avatar to walk around and "talk" to current students. It's amazing to see how different their pitches are, too. Sure, some universities tout their academic excellence, but others play up their international programs, job placement programs, and even amenities (rock climbing walls!). Of course, she's familiar with some of the schools that are starting to court her, and she already has a pretty good idea in her mind of what they're about. But others feel like a blank slate; so far at least, she has absolutely no idea about what it would be like to be a student at these schools. As Saundra starts to post some SnapChat queries about where people are looking, she realizes it's going to be an intense year.

OBJECTIVE 8-1
It is important for consumer researchers to understand the nature and power of attitudes.

The Power of Attitudes

People use the term *attitude* in many contexts. A friend might ask you, "What is your attitude toward abortion?" A parent might scold, "Young man, I don't like your attitude." Some bars even euphemistically refer to happy hour as "an attitude adjustment period." For our purposes, though, an **attitude** is a lasting, general evaluation of people (including oneself), objects, advertisements, or issues.[1] We call anything toward which one has an attitude an **attitude object** (A_o). As Saundra will learn (and no doubt you did too) during her college search process, we assimilate information from a variety of sources and often put a lot of effort into forming an attitude toward many things, including a complex attitude object like a university.

An attitude is lasting because it tends to endure over time. It is general because it applies to more than a momentary event, such as hearing a loud noise, though you might, over time, develop a negative attitude toward all loud noises. Consumers have attitudes toward a wide range of attitude objects, from product-specific behaviors (e.g., you use Crest toothpaste rather than Colgate) to more general, consumption-related behaviors (e.g., how often you should brush your teeth). Attitudes help to determine whom you choose to date, what music you listen to, whether you will recycle aluminum cans, or whether you choose to become a consumer researcher for a living. In this chapter we'll consider the contents of an attitude, how we form attitudes, and how we measure them. We will also review some of the surprisingly complex relationships between attitudes and behavior and then take a closer look at how marketers can change these attitudes.

Psychologist Daniel Katz developed the **functional theory of attitudes** to explain how attitudes facilitate social behavior.[2] According to this pragmatic approach, attitudes exist *because* they serve some function for the person. Consumers who expect that they will need to deal with similar situations at a future time will be more likely to start to form an attitude in anticipation.[3] Two people can each have an attitude toward some object for different reasons. As a result, it's helpful for a marketer to know *why* an attitude is held before he or she tries to change it. These are different attitude functions:

- *Utilitarian function*—The **utilitarian function** relates to the basic principles of reward and punishment we learned about in Chapter 4. We develop some attitudes toward products simply because they provide pleasure or pain. If a person likes the taste of a cheeseburger, that person will develop a positive attitude toward cheeseburgers. Ads that stress straightforward product benefits (e.g., you should drink Diet Coke "just for the taste of it") appeal to the utilitarian function.
- *Value-expressive function*—Attitudes that perform a **value-expressive function** relate to the consumer's self-concept (Chapter 6) or central values (Chapter 7). A person forms a product attitude in this case because of what the product says about him or her as a person. Value-expressive attitudes also are highly relevant to the psychographic analyses we discussed in Chapter 7, which consider how consumers cultivate a cluster of activities, interests, and opinions to express a particular social identity.
- *Ego-defensive function*—Attitudes we form to protect ourselves either from external threats or internal feelings perform an **ego-defensive function**. An early marketing study showed that housewives resisted the use of instant coffee because it threatened their conception of themselves as capable homemakers (this doesn't seem to be a big issue for most anymore!).[4] Products that promise to help a man project a "macho" image (e.g., Marlboro cigarettes)

appeal to his insecurities about his masculinity. Another example is deodorant ads that stress the dire, embarrassing consequences when you're caught with underarm odor in public.

- *Knowledge function*—We form some attitudes because we need order, structure, or meaning. A **knowledge function** applies when a person is in an ambiguous situation ("it's okay to wear casual pants to work, but only on Friday") or when he or she confronts a new product (e.g., "Bayer wants you to know about pain relievers").

The ABC Model of Attitudes

When Subaru of America began work on a new marketing strategy, the automaker discovered that even though most auto buyers had heard of the brand, few had strong emotional connections to it. However, current Subaru owners expressed strong passion and even love for the brand. To ramp up this emotional connection for non-owners as well, the new campaign targets people who are in three different stages of buying a car—what Subaru calls the *heart*, the *head*, and the *wallet*. The *heart* stage focuses on the love that owners show for their cars; commercials share personal stories of their attachment. The *head* stage ads, in contrast, present the rational side of specific models as they emphasize how the cars benefit their owners in terms of reliability, economy, and so on. Then, the *wallet* ads deal with the financial details of actually buying a Subaru; these include special offers from local dealers.[5]

Like the Subaru campaign, an attitude has three components: affect, behavior, and cognition. As we saw in Chapter 5, *affect* describes how a consumer *feels* about an attitude object. **Behavior** refers to the *actions* he or she takes toward the object or in some cases at least his or her intentions to take action about it (but, as we will discuss at a later point, an intention does not always result in an actual behavior). **Cognition** is what he or she *believes* to be true about the attitude object. You can remember these three components of an attitude as the **ABC model of attitudes**.

The ABC model emphasizes the interrelationships among knowing, feeling, and doing. We can't determine consumers' attitudes toward a product if we just identify their cognitions (beliefs) about it. For example, a researcher may find that shoppers "know" a particular camcorder has a power zoom lens, auto focus, and a flying erase head, but simply knowing this doesn't indicate whether they feel these attributes are good, bad, or irrelevant, or whether they would actually buy the camcorder.

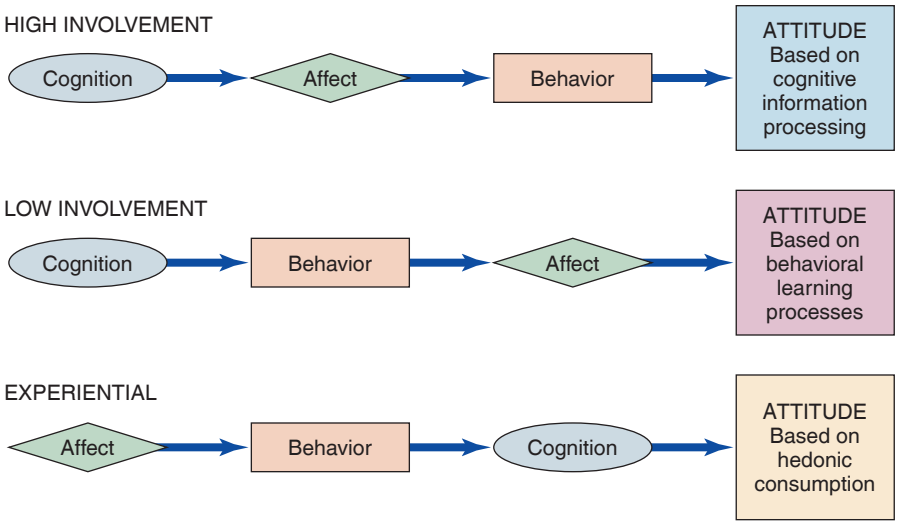
Hierarchies of Effects

Which comes first: knowing, feeling, or doing? It turns out that each element may lead things off, depending on the situation. Attitude researchers developed the concept of a **hierarchy of effects** to explain the relative impact of the three components. Each hierarchy specifies that a fixed sequence of steps occur *en route* to an attitude. Figure 8.1 summarizes these three hierarchies.

The High-Involvement Hierarchy: Think → Feel → Do

The **high-involvement hierarchy** assumes that a person approaches a product decision as a problem-solving process. First, he or she forms beliefs about a product as she accumulates knowledge (*beliefs*) regarding relevant attributes. Next, he or she evaluates these beliefs and forms a feeling about the product (*affect*).[6] Then he or she engages in a relevant behavior, such as when he or she buys a product that offers the attributes he or she feels good about. This hierarchy assumes that a consumer is

Figure 8.1 THREE HIERARCHIES OF EFFECTS



highly involved when he or she makes a purchase decision (see Chapter 5).[7] He or she is motivated to seek out a lot of information, carefully weigh alternatives, and come to a thoughtful decision.

The Low-Involvement Hierarchy: Think → Do → Feel

The **low-involvement hierarchy of effects** assumes that the consumer initially doesn't have a strong preference for one brand over another; instead, he or she acts on the basis of limited knowledge and forms an evaluation only *after* he or she has bought the product.[8] The attitude is likely to come about through behavioral learning, as good or bad experiences reinforce his or her initial choice.

The possibility that consumers simply don't care enough about many decisions to carefully assemble a set of product beliefs and then evaluate them is important. This implies that all of our well-intentioned efforts to influence beliefs and carefully communicate information about product attributes may fall on deaf ears. Consumers aren't necessarily going to pay attention anyway; they are more likely to respond to simple stimulus–response connections when they make purchase decisions. For example, a consumer who chooses among paper towels might remember that "Bounty is the quicker picker-upper" rather than systematically comparing all the brands on the shelf. Get a life!

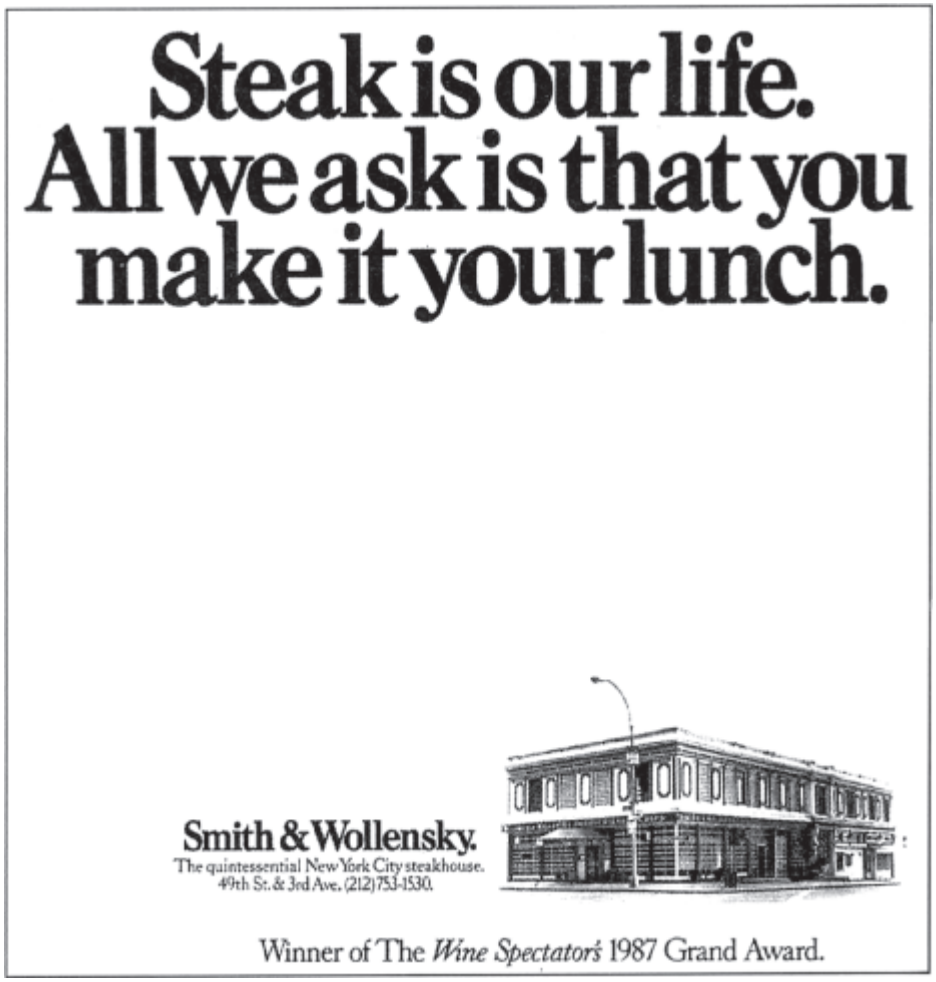
The notion of consumers' low involvement is a bitter pill for some marketers to swallow. Who wants to admit that what they market is not important to the people who buy it? A brand manager for, say, a brand of bubble gum or cat food may find it hard to believe that consumers don't put that much thought into purchasing the product because he or she spends many waking (and perhaps sleeping) hours thinking about it.

For marketers, the ironic silver lining to this low-involvement cloud is that under these conditions, consumers are not motivated to process a lot of complex, brand-related information. Instead, they will be swayed by principles of behavioral learning, such as the simple responses that conditioned brand names or point-of-purchase displays elicit (as we discussed in Chapter 4).

The Experiential Hierarchy: Feel → Do → Think

According to the **experiential hierarchy of effects**, we act on the basis of our emotional reactions. The experiential perspective highlights the idea that intangible

This ad for New York's famous Smith & Wollensky restaurant emphasizes that marketers and others associated with a product or service are often more involved with it than are their customers.
Source: Courtesy of Smith & Wollensky Steak House.



product attributes, such as package design, advertising, brand names, and the nature of the setting in which the experience occurs, can help shape our attitudes toward a brand. We may base these reactions on *hedonic* motivations, such as whether using

Product design and other aesthetic attributes help to influence attitudes when consumers choose on the basis of their emotional reactions.
Source: Rob Cousins/Alamy Stock Photo.



the product is exciting like the Sony PlayStation or aesthetically pleasing like the Apple iPhone X.

Even the emotions the communicator expresses have an impact. A smile is infectious; in a process we term **emotional contagion**, messages that happy people deliver enhance our attitude toward the product.[9] Numerous studies demonstrate that the mood a person is in when he or she sees or hears a marketing message influences how he or she will process the ad, the likelihood that he or she will remember the information he or she sees, and how he or she will feel about the advertised item and related products in the future. So trot out that emoji 😀!

Marketing Pitfall

Can a product's design ever be *too* beautiful? Some recent research says yes. Although we know that consumers respond positively to aesthetically, pleasing options, ironically, in some cases, the packaging (not the consumers) can be so attractive that consumers are reluctant to use them and they feel sad if they do because they have destroyed the effort required to make them attractive. In a field study, researchers stocked a fitness studio bathroom with plain white toilet paper or white toilet paper with holiday motifs. Patrons used twice the number of plain sheets! A laboratory study replicated this effect; participants ate fewer cupcakes with fancy decorations than they did plain cupcakes.[10] There is a potential silver lining to these findings: Ironically, if manufacturers want to reduce the waste that products like napkins produce, the solution may be to make them so pretty people don't want to use them.

OBJECTIVE 8-2
We form attitudes in several ways.

How Do We Form Attitudes?

We all have lots of attitudes, and we don't usually question how we got them. Certainly, you're not born with the heartfelt conviction that, say, Pepsi is better than Coke, or that emo music liberates the soul. From where do these attitudes come?

We form an attitude in several different ways, depending on the particular hierarchy of effects that operates. As we saw in Chapter 4, we simply may form an attitude toward a brand as a result of classical conditioning: A marketer repeatedly pairs an attitude object such as the Pepsi name with a catchy jingle ("You're in the Pepsi Generation"). Or we can form an attitude because of instrumental conditioning: The marketer reinforces us when we consume the attitude object (e.g., you take a swig of Pepsi and it quenches your thirst). Finally, this learning can result from a complex cognitive process. For example, teenagers may model the behavior of friends and media endorsers, such as Beyoncé, who drink Pepsi because they believe that this will allow them to fit in with the desirable lifestyle that Pepsi commercials portray.

All Attitudes Are Not Created Equal

It's important to distinguish among types of attitudes because not all form in the same way.[11] One consumer may be highly brand-loyal; she has an enduring, deeply held, positive attitude toward an attitude object, and it would be difficult to weaken this involvement. However, another woman may be a more fickle consumer: She may have a mildly positive attitude toward a product but be quite willing to abandon it when something better comes along. In this section, we'll consider the differences between strongly and weakly held attitudes and briefly review some of the major theoretical perspectives researchers use to explain how attitudes form and relate to our other attitudes.

Consumers vary in their *commitment* to an attitude; the degree of commitment relates to their level of involvement with the attitude object (see Chapter 5).[12] Let's look at three (increasing) levels of commitment:

1. **Compliance**—At the lowest level of involvement, **compliance**, we form an attitude because it helps us to gain rewards or avoid punishment. This attitude is superficial; it is likely to change when others no longer monitor our behavior or when another option becomes available. You may drink Pepsi because the cafeteria sells it, and it is too much trouble to go elsewhere for a Coca-Cola.
2. **Identification—Identification** occurs when we form an attitude to conform to another person's or group's expectations. Advertising that depicts the dire

social consequences when we choose some products over others relies on the tendency of consumers to imitate the behavior of desirable models (more on this in Chapter 11).

3 **Internalization**—At a high level of involvement we call **internalization**, deep-seated attitudes become part of our value system. These attitudes are difficult to change because they are so important to us. The infamous Coke debacle of the 1980s (still a standard in marketing textbooks today) illustrates what can happen when a marketer messes with strongly held attitudes. In this case, Coca-Cola decided to change its flavor formula to meet the needs of younger consumers who often preferred a sweeter taste (more characteristic of Pepsi). The company conducted rigorous blind *taste tests* that showed people who didn't know what brands they were drinking preferred the flavor of the new formula. Much to its surprise, when New Coke hit the shelves, the company faced a consumer revolt as die-hard Coke fans protested. This allegiance to Coke was obviously more than a minor taste preference for these people; the brand was intertwined with their social identities and took on intense patriotic and nostalgic properties.

The Consistency Principle

Have you ever heard someone say, "Pepsi is my favorite soft drink. It tastes terrible," or "I love my boyfriend. He's the biggest idiot I've ever met"? Probably not (at least until the couple gets married!), because these beliefs or evaluations don't go together. According to the **principle of cognitive consistency**, we value harmony among our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and a need to maintain uniformity among these elements motivates us. This desire means that, if necessary, we change our thoughts, feelings, or behaviors to make them consistent with other experiences. That boyfriend may slip up and act like a moron occasionally, but his girlfriend (eventually) will find a way to forgive him—or dump him.

The consistency principle is an important reminder that we don't form our attitudes in a vacuum: A big factor is how well they fit with other, related attitudes we already hold. Sometimes we jump through hoops to justify our desires. For example, researchers find that promotions such as price discounts, rebates, coupons, and loyalty rewards are more effective for hedonic purchases than for utilitarian purchases. Why? Because it is more difficult to defend buying something just because it makes us feel good rather than something we need. These promotions provide the guilt-reducing justification we require to splurge on such items.[13]

We've already reviewed this phenomenon in Chapter 5, when we learned about the *theory of cognitive dissonance.* We saw there that when a person is confronted with inconsistencies among attitudes or behaviors, he or she will take some action to resolve this "dissonance"; perhaps he or she will change his or her attitude or modify his or her behavior to restore consistency. The theory has important ramifications for consumer behavior. We often confront situations in which there is some conflict between our attitudes toward a product or service and what we actually do or buy.[14]

According to the theory, our motivation to reduce the negative feelings of dissonance makes us find a way for our beliefs and feelings to fit together. The theory focuses on situations in which two cognitive elements clash. A *cognitive element* is something a person believes about himself or herself, a behavior he or she performs, or an observation about his or her surroundings. For example, the two cognitive elements "I know smoking cigarettes causes cancer" and "I smoke cigarettes" are *dissonant* with one another. This psychological inconsistency creates a feeling of discomfort that the smoker tries to reduce. The magnitude of dissonance depends on both the importance and number of dissonant elements.[15] In other words, we're

more likely to observe dissonance in high-involvement situations where there is more pressure to reduce inconsistencies.

We reduce dissonance when we eliminate, add, or change elements. A person can stop smoking (*eliminating*), or remember Great-Aunt Sophie who smoked until the day she died at age 95 (*adding*). Alternatively, he or she might question the research that links cancer and smoking (*changing*), perhaps by believing industry-sponsored studies that try to refute this connection.

Dissonance theory can help to explain why evaluations of a product tend to increase *after* we buy the product. The cognitive element, "I made a stupid decision," is dissonant with the element, "I am not a stupid person," so we tend to find even more reasons to like something after it becomes ours. A classic study at a horse race demonstrated this *post-purchase dissonance*. Bettors evaluated their chosen horse more highly and were more confident of its success *after* they placed a bet than before. Because the bettor financially commits to the choice, he or she reduces dissonance by elevating the attractiveness of the chosen alternative relative to the ones not chosen.[16] One implication of this phenomenon is that consumers actively seek support for their decisions so they can justify them; therefore, marketers should supply their customers with additional reinforcement after they purchase to bolster these decisions.

Self-Perception Theory

Do we always change our attitudes to be in line with our behavior because we're motivated to reduce cognitive dissonance? **Self-perception theory** provides an alternative explanation of dissonance effects.[17] It assumes that we observe our own behavior to determine just what our attitudes are, much as we assume that we know what another person's attitude is when we watch what he does. The theory states that we maintain consistency as we infer that we must have a positive attitude toward an object if we have bought or consumed it (assuming that we freely made this choice). Thus, you might say to yourself, "I guess I must be into SnapChat pretty big time. I seem to spend half my life on it."

Self-perception theory helps to explain the effectiveness of a strategy salespeople call the **foot-in-the-door technique**: They know that consumers are more likely to comply with a big request if they agree to a smaller one first.[18] The name for this technique comes from the old practice of door-to-door selling; salespeople learned to plant their foot in a doorway so the prospect doesn't slam it on them. A good salesperson knows that he or she is more likely to get an order if he or she can persuade the customer to open the door and talk. By agreeing to do so, the customer signals that he or she is willing to listen to the salesperson's pitch. Placing an order is consistent with the self-perception that "I'm the kind of person who is willing to buy something from a salesperson who knocks on my door."[19] Recent research also points to the possibility that when salespeople ask consumers to make a series of choices, these decisions are cognitively demanding and deplete the resources the person has available to monitor his or her behavior. As a result, the target will opt for easier decisions down the road; in some cases, it may be easier just to comply with the request than to search for reasons why you shouldn't.[20]

Balance Theory

Have you ever heard the expression, "Any friend of Joe's is a friend of mine?" How about "My enemy's enemy is my friend?" **Balance theory** considers how people perceive relations among different attitude objects, and how they alter their attitudes so that these remain consistent (or "balanced").[21] One study even found that when a person observes two other individuals who are eating similar food, they assume they must be friends![22]



As it gets increasingly difficult for cigarette smokers to indulge their habit in public places like offices, they have to work harder to reduce cognitive dissonance in order to justify the effort to continue this practice.
Source: Scott Griessel/Fotolia.

A balance theory perspective involves relations (always from the perceiver's subjective point of view) among three elements, so we call the resulting attitude structures *triads*. Each triad contains (1) a person and his or her perceptions of (2) an attitude object and (3) some other person or object. The theory specifies that we want relations among elements in a triad to be harmonious. If they are unbalanced, this creates tension that we are motivated to reduce by changing our perceptions to restore balance.

We link elements together in one of two ways: They can have either a *unit relation,* where we think that a person is somehow connected to an attitude object (something like a belief), or they can have a *sentiment relation*, where a person expresses liking or disliking for an attitude object. You might perceive that a dating couple has a positive sentiment relation. On getting married, they will have a positive unit relation. If they get divorced, they sever the unit relation.

To see how balance theory might work, consider the following scenario:

- Kristin would like to date Dan, who is in her consumer behavior class. In balance theory terms, Kristin has a positive sentiment relation with Dan.
- One day, Dan shows up in class wearing an earring. Dan has a positive unit relation with the earring.
- Men who wear earrings are a turnoff to Kristin. She has a negative sentiment relation with men's earrings.

According to balance theory, Kristin faces an unbalanced triad. As Figure 8.2 shows, she will experience pressure to restore balance by altering some aspect of the triad. How can she do this? She could decide that she does not like Dan after all. Or her liking for Dan could prompt her to decide that earrings on men are really pretty cool. She might even try to negate the unit relation between Dan and the earring by deciding that he must wear it as part of a fraternity initiation (this reduces the free-choice element). Finally, she could choose to "leave the field" by accepting a date with Dan's roommate Doug who doesn't wear an earring (but who has an awesome tattoo). Note that although the theory does not specify which of these routes Kristin will choose, it does predict that she will change one or more of her perceptions to achieve balance. Although this example is an oversimplified representation of most attitude processes, it helps to explain a number of consumer behavior phenomena.

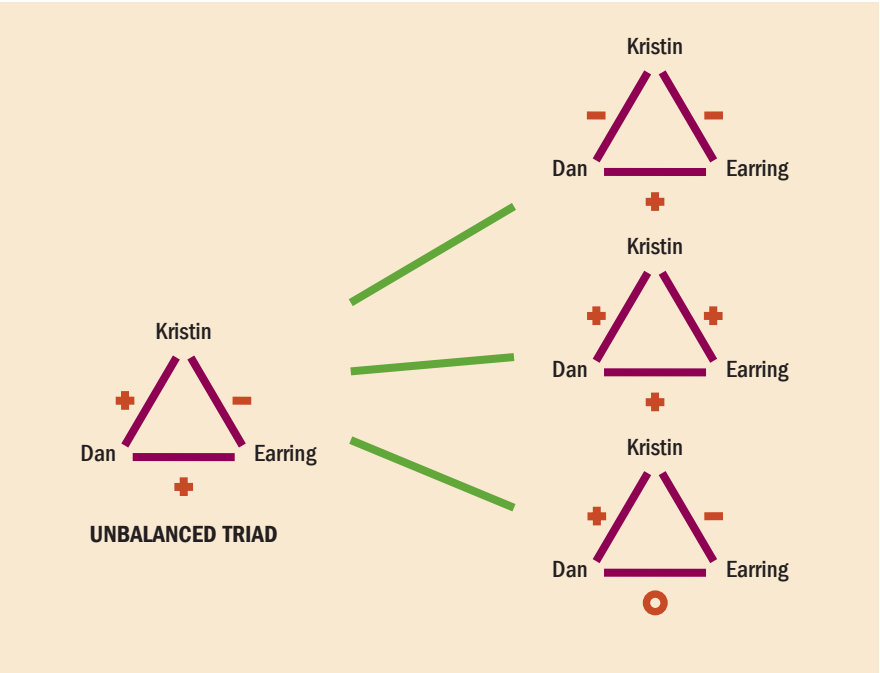


Figure 8.2 BALANCE THEORY

Marketing Opportunity

Consumers often like to publicize their connections with successful people or organizations (no matter how shaky the connection) to enhance their own standing. Researchers call this tactic **basking in reflected glory**. A series of studies at Arizona State University (ASU) showed how students' desires to identify with a winning image—in this case, ASU's football team—influenced their consumption behaviors. After the team played a game each weekend, observers recorded the incidence of school-related items, such as ASU T-shirts and caps that students walking around campus wore. The researchers correlated the frequency of these behaviors to the team's performance. If the team won on Saturday, students were more likely to show off their school affiliation (basking in reflected glory) the following Monday than if the team lost. And the bigger the point spread, the more likely researchers were to observe students who wore clothes with the ASU logo.[23]



A woman who dislikes men in earrings has to resolve a state of imbalance if she wants to date a guy who wears one.
Source: youngnova/123RF.

Balance theory reminds us that when we have balanced perceptions, our attitudes also are likely to be stable. However, when we experience inconsistencies, we also are more likely to change our attitudes. Balance theory helps explain why consumers like to be linked to positively valued objects. When you form a unit relation with a popular product (e.g., you wear a popular designer's clothing, drive a hot car, or follow a popular singer), this may improve the chances that other people will include you as a positive sentiment relation in their triads.

At the college level, many schools in addition to ASU reap huge revenues when they license their school's name and logo. Universities with strong athletic



When a school's team wins a game, students (and fans) are more likely to wear merchandise that link them to the institution as they "bask in reflected glory."
Source: Rose-Marie Murray/Alamy Stock Photo.

programs, such as Michigan State, Miami, and Auburn, clean up when they sell millions of dollars worth of merchandise (everything from T-shirts to toilet seats). Yale was a relative latecomer to this game, but the director of licensing explained the decision to profit from the use of the school's name and the likeness of bulldog mascot Handsome Dan: "We recognize that our name means a lot—even to people who didn't go here. Plus, this way we can crack down on the Naked Coed Lacrosse shirts out there with Yale on them."[24]

This "balancing act" is at the heart of **celebrity endorsements**, in which marketers hope that the star's popularity will transfer to the product or when a nonprofit organization recruits a celebrity to discourage harmful behaviors.[25] We will consider this strategy at length later in this chapter. For now, it pays to remember that creating a unit relation between a product and a star can backfire if the public's opinion of the celebrity endorser shifts from positive to negative. For example, Pepsi pulled an ad that featured Madonna after she released a controversial music video involving religion and sex; it also happened when celebrity bad girl Paris Hilton got busted. The strategy can also cause trouble if people question the star–product unit relation: This occurred when the late singer Michael Jackson, who also did promotions for Pepsi, subsequently confessed that he didn't even drink soda.

Attitude Models

When market researchers want to assess consumers' attitudes toward beer brands, they might simply go to a bar and ask a bunch of guys, "How do you feel about Budweiser?" However, as we saw previously, attitudes can be a lot more complex than that. One problem is that many attributes or qualities may link to a product or service; depending on the individual, some of these will be more or less important ("Less filling!" "Tastes great!"). Another problem is that when a person decides to take action toward an attitude object, other factors influence his or her behavior, such as whether he or she feels that his family or friends would approve. **Attitude models** specify the different elements that might work together to influence people's evaluations of attitude objects.

Multiattribute Attitude Models

A simple response does not always tell us everything we need to know, either about *why* the consumer feels a certain way toward a product or about what marketers can do to change her attitude. Our beliefs (accurate or not) about a product often are key to how we evaluate it. Warner-Lambert discovered this when it conducted research for its Fresh Burst Listerine mouthwash. A research firm paid families so it could set up cameras in their bathrooms and watch their daily routines (maybe they should have just checked out YouTube). Participants who bought both Fresh Burst and rival

Scope said they used mouthwash to make their breath smell good. But Scope users swished around the liquid and then spit it out, whereas Listerine users kept the product in their mouths for a long time (one respondent held the stuff in until he got in the car and finally spit it out in a sewer a block away!). These findings told Listerine that the brand still hadn't shaken its medicine-like image.[26]

Because attitudes are so complex, marketing researchers may use **multiattribute attitude models** to understand them. This type of model assumes that consumers' attitude toward an attitude object (A_o) depends on the beliefs they have about several of its attributes. When we use a multiattribute model, we assume that we can identify these specific beliefs and combine them to derive a measure of the consumer's overall attitude. We'll describe how these models work with the example of a consumer who evaluates a complex attitude object that should be familiar to you: a college.

Basic multiattribute models contain three specific elements:[27]

- *Attributes* are characteristics of the A_o. A researcher tries to identify the attributes that most consumers use when they evaluate the A_o. For example, one of a college's attributes is its scholarly reputation.
- *Beliefs* are cognitions about the specific A_o (usually relative to others like it). A belief measure assesses the extent to which the consumer perceives that a brand possesses a particular attribute. For example, a student might believe that the University of North Carolina is strong academically (or maybe this is consistency theory at work because your humble author went to graduate school there!).
- *Importance weights* reflect the relative priority of an attribute to the consumer. Although people might consider an A_o on a number of attributes, some attributes are likely to be more important than others (i.e., consumers will give them greater weight). Furthermore, these weights are likely to differ across consumers. In the case of colleges and universities, for example, one student might stress research opportunities, whereas another might assign greater weight to athletic programs.

The most influential multiattribute model is called the **Fishbein Model**, named after its primary developer.[28] The model measures three components of attitude:

- *Salient beliefs* people have about an A_o (i.e., those beliefs about the object a person considers during evaluation).
- *Object-attribute linkages*, or the probability that a particular object has an important attribute.
- *Evaluation* of each of the important attributes.

When we combine these three elements, we compute a consumer's overall attitude toward an object (we'll see later how researchers modify this equation to increase its accuracy). The basic formula is:

$$A_{jk} = \Sigma \beta_{ijk} I_{ik}$$

where

i = attribute
j = brand
k = consumer
I = the importance weight given attribute i by consumer k
β = consumer k's belief regarding the extent to which brand j possesses attribute i
A = a particular consumer's (k's) attitude score for brand j

We obtain the overall attitude score (A) when we multiply consumers' rating of each attribute for all the brands they considered by the importance rating for that attribute.

To see how this basic multiattribute model works, let's suppose we want to predict which college our friend Saundra from the beginning of the chapter is likely to attend. After months of waiting anxiously, Saundra gets accepted by four schools. Because she must now decide among these, we would first like to know which attributes Saundra will consider when she forms an attitude toward each school. We can then ask Saundra to assign a rating regarding how well each school performs on each attribute and also determine the relative importance of the attributes to her.

By summing scores on each attribute (after we weight each by its relative importance), we compute an overall attitude score for each school. Table 8.1 shows these hypothetical ratings. Based on this analysis, it seems that Saundra has the most favorable attitude toward Smith. She is clearly someone who would like to attend a college for women with a solid academic reputation rather than a school that offers a strong athletic program or a party atmosphere.

Marketing Applications of the Multiattribute Model

Suppose you were the director of marketing for Northland College, another school Saundra considered. How might you use the data from this analysis to improve your image?

Capitalize on Relative Advantage. If prospective students view one brand as superior on a particular attribute, a marketer needs to convince consumers like Saundra that this particular attribute is important. For example, although Saundra rates Northland's social atmosphere highly, she does not believe this attribute is a valued aspect for a college. As Northland's marketing director, you might emphasize the importance of an active social life, varied experiences, or even the development of future business contacts that a student forges when he or she makes strong college friendships.

Strengthen Perceived Product/Attribute Linkages. A marketer may discover that consumers do not equate his brand with a certain attribute. Advertising campaigns often address this problem when they stress a specific quality to consumers

TABLE 8.1 The Basic Multiattribute Model: Saundra's College Decision

		Beliefs (B)			
Attribute (i)	importance (I)	Smith	Princeton	Rutgers	Northland
Academic reputation	6	8	9	6	3
All women	7	9	3	3	3
Cost	4	2	2	6	9
Proximity to home	3	2	2	6	9
Athletics	1	1	2	5	1
Party atmosphere	2	1	3	7	9
Library facilities	5	7	9	7	2
Attitude score		163	142	153	131

(e.g., "new and improved"). Saundra apparently does not think much of Northland's academic quality, athletic programs, or library facilities. You might develop an informational campaign to improve these perceptions (e.g., "little-known facts about Northland").

Add a New Attribute. Product marketers frequently try to distinguish themselves from their competitors when they add a product feature. Northland College might try to emphasize some unique aspect, such as a hands-on internship program for business majors that takes advantage of ties to the local community.

Influence Competitors' Ratings. Finally, you can decrease your competitors' higher ratings with a *comparative advertising* strategy. In this case, you might publish an ad that lists the tuition rates of a number of area schools with which Northland compares favorably and emphasize the value for the money its students get.

Marketing Pitfall

The (in)consistency between attitudes and behavior links to a major public health problem: **medication adherence**. This term describes the extent to which people fill and actually take prescribed medicines. Although some patients unfortunately don't adhere to prescriptions because they can't afford them, many simply forget to swallow their pills. This breakdown between attitudes and behavior threatens many people's health and it also adds huge costs to the healthcare system. An industry study estimates it costs U.S. taxpayers $290 billion annually.[29] The CVS chain found that even for chronic diseases, one-third of their customers stopped taking their prescribed medicine after a month, and half stopped after a year. CVS aggressively reminds people to fill their prescriptions with texts, e-mails, and phone calls.[30] Still, even these methods are only part of the solution: People still need to actually take the pills once they get them home.

Do Attitudes Predict Behavior?

Consumer researchers have used multiattribute models for many years, but a major problem plagues them: In many cases, a person's attitude doesn't predict behavior. In a classic demonstration of "do as I say, not as I do," many studies report a low correlation between a person's reported attitude toward something and actual behavior toward it. Some researchers are so discouraged that they question whether attitudes are of any use at all when we try to understand behavior. Hence the popular expression, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions."

In response, researchers tinkered with the Fishbein Model to improve its predictive ability. They call the newer version the **theory of reasoned action**.[31] This model contains several important additions to the original, and although the model is still not perfect, it does a better job of prediction.[32] Let's look at some of the modifications to this model.

Intentions Versus Behavior

Attitudes possess both direction and strength. A person may like or dislike an attitude object with varying degrees of confidence or conviction. It is helpful to distinguish between attitudes we hold firmly and those that are more superficial, especially because a person who holds an attitude with greater conviction is more likely to act on it. One study on environmental issues and marketing activities found, for example, that people who express greater conviction in their feelings regarding environmentally responsible behaviors such as recycling show greater consistency between attitudes and behavioral intentions.[33]

Social pressure also can help motivate consumers to engage in socially responsible behaviors. One study assessed this possibility when it compared the effectiveness of different ways a hotel might encourage guests to reuse their towels. When researchers used a social appeal ("the majority of guests reuse their towels"), this worked better than a functional appeal ("help save the environment"). They also found that compliance was boosted when they phrased the requests in terms of directly relevant others ("the majority of guests in this room reuse their towels") compared to more general group appeals ("the majority of men and women reuse their towels").[34] As this example illustrates, the theory acknowledges the power of other people to influence what we do. Much as we may hate to admit it, what we think others would *like* us to do may override our own preferences. Thus, **normative influence** can result in a contradiction between what we say we will do and what we actually do when the moment of truth arrives.

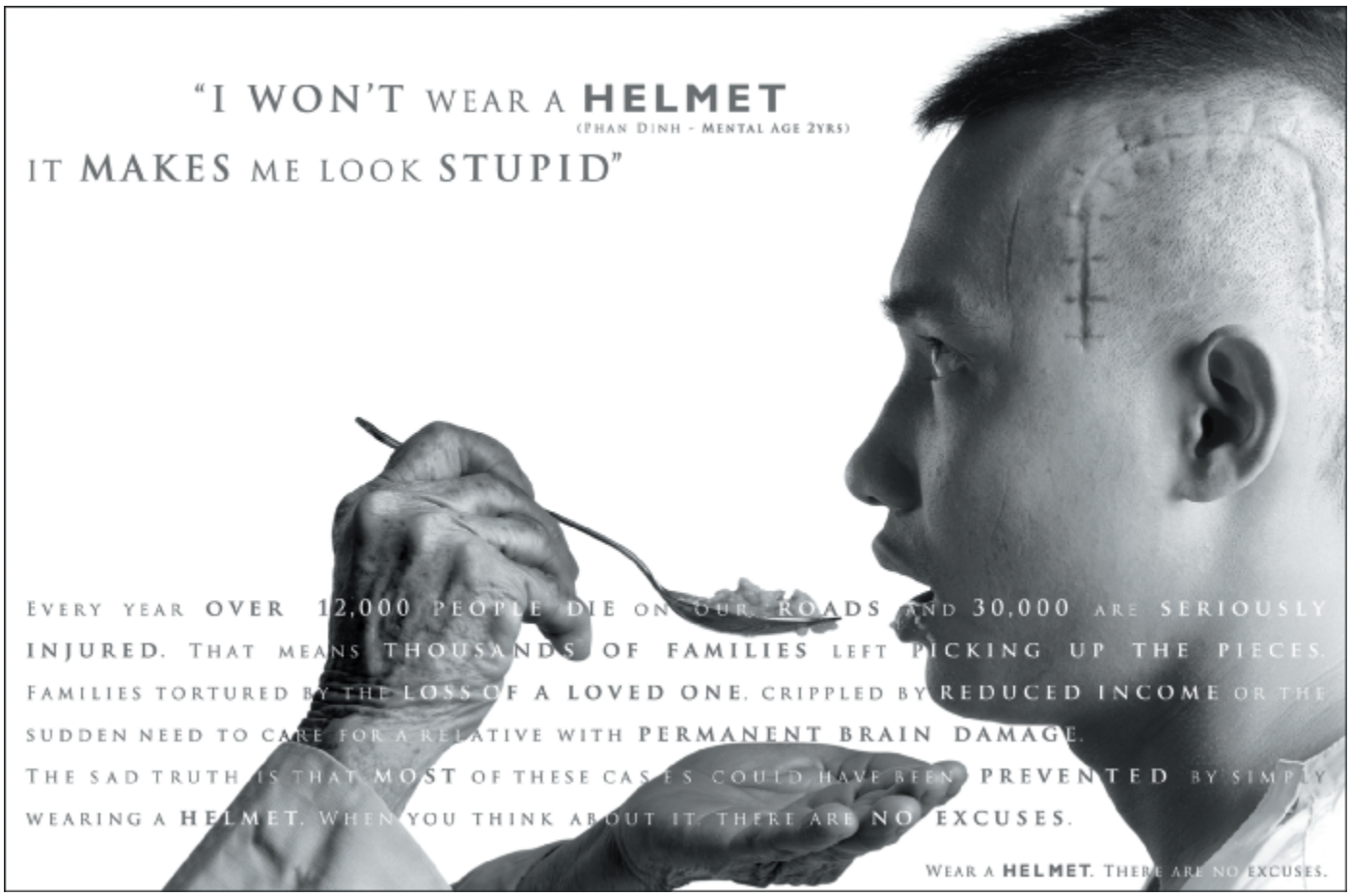


Marketers focus on how a product's attributes are "new and improved" when they want to strengthen the linkage to a quality they think consumers desire.
Source: ducu59us/Shutterstock.

Let's take a closer look at Saundra's college choice. You saw in Table 8.1 that she was eager to attend a predominantly female school. However, if she felt that this choice would be unpopular (perhaps her friends would think she was too nerdy), she might ignore or downgrade this preference when she made her decision. Researchers added a new element, the **subjective norm (SN)**, to account for the effects of what we believe other people think we should do. They use two factors to measure SN: (1) the intensity of a *normative belief (NB)* that others believe we should take or not take some action and (2) the *motivation to comply (MC)* with that belief (i.e., the degree to which the consumer takes others' anticipated reactions into account when she evaluates a purchase).

The newer model also measures **attitude toward the act of buying** ($\mathbf{A}_{act}$), rather than only the attitude toward the product itself. In other words, it focuses on the perceived consequences of a purchase. Knowing how someone feels about buying or using an object turns out to be more valid than merely knowing the consumer's evaluation of the object itself.[35]

To understand this distinction, consider a marketing researcher who wants to measure college students' attitudes toward safe sex and wearing condoms. Although many college students interviewed would probably report a positive attitude toward condom use, can the researcher conclude from the responses that these respondents will actually buy and use them? The researcher might get more accurate results if the same students were asked how likely they are to *buy* condoms. A person might have



This Vietnamese ad employs social pressure (the subjective norm) to address people's attitudes toward wearing helmets.
Source: Asia Injury Prevention Foundation.

a positive A_o toward condoms, but A_{act} (attitude toward the act of obtaining the attitude object) might be negative because of the embarrassment or the hassle involved.

Obstacles to Predicting Behavior in the Theory of Reasoned Action

Despite improvements to the Fishbein Model, problems arise when researchers misapply it. As our discussion about measuring personality traits in Chapter 7 showed, sometimes researchers use a model in ways it was not intended or where certain assumptions about human behavior may not be warranted.[36] Here are some other obstacles to prediction researchers encounter:

- The model tries to predict actual behavior (e.g., taking a diet pill), not the *outcomes* of behavior that some studies assess (e.g., losing weight).
- Some outcomes are beyond our control, such as when the purchase requires the cooperation of other people. For instance, a woman might *want* to get a mortgage, but this intention will be worthless if she cannot find a banker to give her one.
- The basic assumption that behavior is intentional may be invalid in a variety of cases, including impulsive acts, sudden changes in situation, novelty seeking, or even simple repeat buying. One study found that such unexpected events as having guests, changes in the weather, or reading articles about the healthfulness of certain foods significantly affected actual behaviors.[37]

- Measures of attitude often do not really correspond to the behavior they are supposed to predict, either in terms of the A_o or when the act will occur. One common problem is a difference in the level of abstraction researchers employ. For example, knowing a person's attitude toward sports cars may not predict whether he or she will purchase a BMW Z3. It is important to match the level of specificity between the attitude and the behavioral intention.
- A similar problem relates to the *time frame* of the attitude measure. In general, the longer the time between the attitude measurement and the behavior it is supposed to assess, the weaker the relationship will be. For example, predictability improves greatly if we ask a consumer the likelihood that he or she will buy a house in the next week as opposed to within the next 5 years.
- We form stronger and more predictive attitudes through direct, personal experience with an A_o than those we form indirectly through advertising.[38] According to the **attitude accessibility perspective**, behavior is a function of the person's immediate perceptions of the A_o, in the context of the situation in which he or she encounters it. An attitude will guide the evaluation of the object but *only* if a person's memory activates it when he or she encounters the object. These findings underscore the importance of strategies that induce trials (e.g., by widespread product sampling to encourage the consumer to try the product at home, taste tests in grocery stores, test drives at car dealers, and so on) as well as those that maximize exposure to marketing communications.

In addition, most researchers apply the theory of reasoned action in Western settings. Certain assumptions inherent in the model may not necessarily apply to consumers from other cultures. Several cultural roadblocks diminish the universality of the theory of reasoned action:[39]

- The model predicts the performance of a voluntary act. Across cultures, however, many activities, ranging from taking exams and entering military service to receiving an inoculation or even choosing a marriage partner, are not necessarily voluntary.
- The relative impact of subjective norms may vary across cultures. For example, Asian cultures tend to value conformity and "face saving," so it is possible that subjective norms involving the anticipated reactions of others to the choice will have an even greater impact on behavior for many Asian consumers. Indeed, a study conducted during an election in Singapore successfully predicted how people would vote as it assessed their voting intentions beforehand. These intentions were in turn influenced by such factors as voters' attitudes toward the candidate, attitudes toward the political party, and subjective norms, which in Singapore includes an emphasis on harmonious and close ties among members of the society.
- The model measures behavioral intentions and thus presupposes that consumers are actively thinking ahead and planning future behaviors. The intention concept assumes that consumers have a linear time sense; they think in terms of past, present, and future. As we'll discuss in Chapter 10, not all cultures subscribe to this perspective on time.
- A consumer who forms an intention implicitly claims that he or she is in control of his or her actions. Some cultures (e.g., Muslim people) tend to be fatalistic and do not necessarily believe in the concept of free will. Indeed, one study that compared students from the United States, Jordan, and Thailand found evidence for cultural differences in assumptions about fatalism and control over the future.

OBJECTIVE 8-3
Persuasion involves an active attempt to change attitudes.

Persuasion: How Do Marketers Change Attitudes?

BUY NOW! Advertisers constantly bombard us with messages imploring us to change our attitudes—and of course buy their products. These persuasion attempts can range from logical arguments to graphic pictures, from peers who try to intimidate us to celebrities who try to charm us. Now we'll review some of the factors that help gauge the effectiveness of marketing communications. Our focus will be on some basic aspects of communication that specifically help to determine how and if consumers will form new attitudes or modify existing ones.

Persuasion is an active attempt to change attitudes. This is of course job number one for many marketing communicators. Later we'll learn more about how marketers try to accomplish this, but for now we'll set the stage by listing some basic psychological principles that influence people to change their minds or comply with a request:[40]

- **Reciprocity**—We are more likely to give if first we receive. That's why including money in a mail survey questionnaire (in some cases, as little as a nickel or dime) increases the response rate compared to surveys that come without financial incentives in the envelope.
- **Scarcity**—Like people, items are more attractive when they aren't available. In one study, researchers asked people to rate the quality of chocolate chip cookies. Participants who only got one cookie liked them better than did those who evaluated more of the same kind of cookie. That helps explain why we tend to value "limited-edition" items.
- **Authority**—We believe an authoritative source much more readily than one that is less authoritative. That explains why the U.S. public's opinion on an issue can shift by as much as 2 percent when the *New York Times* (but not the *National Enquirer*) runs an article about it. All the recent hoopla about "fake news" that appears online makes this factor even more important—consumers' trust in authoritative websites is eroding because it's fairly easy for hackers to plant information even on the most credible ones.
- **Consistency**—As we saw previously in this chapter, people try not to contradict themselves in terms of what they say and do about an issue. In one study, students at an Israeli university who solicited donations to help disabled people doubled the amount they normally collected in a neighborhood if they first asked



Scarcity makes products more desirable.
Source: CarmenKarin/Shutterstock.

the residents to sign a petition supporting this cause two weeks before they actually asked for the donations.

- **Liking**—We agree with those we like or admire. A study found that good-looking fund-raisers raised almost twice as much as other volunteers who were not as attractive.
- **Consensus**—We consider what others do before we decide what to do. People are more likely to donate to a charity if they first see a list of the names of their neighbors who have already done so.

Decisions, Decisions: Tactical Communications Options

Suppose Audi wants to create an advertising campaign for a new ragtop it targets to young drivers. As it plans this campaign, the automaker must develop a message that will arouse desire for the car. To craft persuasive messages that might persuade someone to buy this car instead of the many others available, we must answer several questions:

- Who will drive the car in the ad? A NASCAR driver? A career woman? A reality show star? The source of a message helps determine whether consumers will accept it.
- How should we construct the message? Should it emphasize the negative consequences of being left out when others drive cool cars and you still tool around in your old clunker? Should it directly compare the car with others already on the market, or maybe present a fantasy in which a tough-minded female executive meets a dashing stranger while she cruises down the highway in her Audi?
- What media should we use? Should the ad run in a magazine? Should we air it on TV? Sell the product door-to-door? Post the material on a website or create a Facebook group? Convince bloggers on popular sites like Justacarguy.com or Carscoops.com to write about it?[41] Reward shoppers who check in on Foursquare at an Audi dealership? If we do produce a print ad, should we run it in the pages of *Vogue*? *Good Housekeeping*? *Car and Driver*? Sometimes *where* you say something is as important as *what* you say. Ideally, we should match the attributes of the medium with those of what we sell. For example, advertising in magazines with high prestige is more effective when we want to communicate messages about overall product image and quality, whereas specialized expert magazines do a better job when we want to convey factual information.[42]
- What characteristics of the target market might lead its members to accept the ad? If targeted users are frustrated in their daily lives, they might be more receptive to a fantasy appeal. If they're status-oriented, maybe a commercial should show bystanders who swoon with admiration as the car cruises by.

The Elements of Communication

Marketers traditionally rely on the **communications model** in Figure 8.3. This model specifies the elements they need to control to communicate with their customers. One of these is a *source*, where the communication originates. Another is the *message* itself. There are many ways to say something, and the structure of the message has a significant effect on how we perceive it. We must transmit the message via a *medium*, which could be TV, radio, magazines, billboards, personal contact, or even a matchbook cover. One or more *receivers* interpret the message in light of their own experiences. Finally, the source receives *feedback* so that the marketer can use receivers' reactions to modify aspects of the message as necessary.

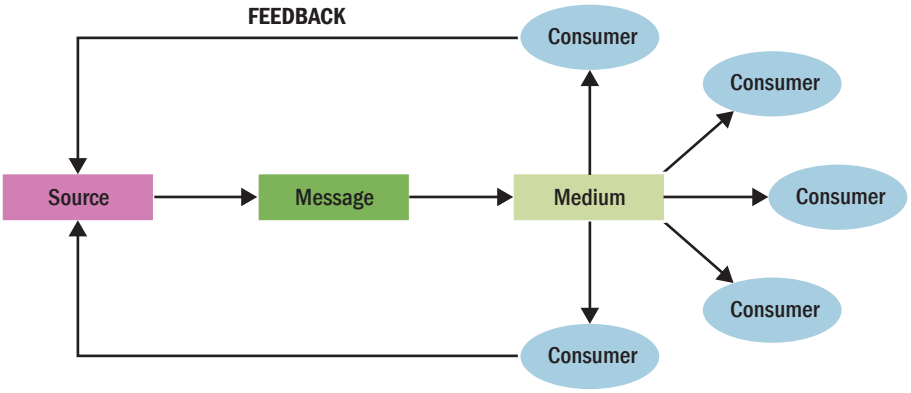


Figure 8.3 THE TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS MODEL

An Updated View: Interactive Communications

The traditional communications model is not entirely wrong, but it also doesn't tell the whole story—especially in today's dynamic world of interactivity, where consumers have many more choices available to them and greater control over which messages they *choose* to process.[43]

In fact, the popular strategy we call **permission marketing** acknowledges that a marketer will be more successful when he or she communicates with consumers who have already agreed to listen to him or her; consumers who "opt out" of listening to the message probably weren't good prospects in the first place.[44] In contrast, those who say they want to learn more are likely to be receptive to marketing communications they have chosen to see or hear. As the permission marketing concept reminds us, we don't have to simply sit there and take it. We have a voice in deciding what messages we choose to see and when, and we exercise that option more and more.

Social scientists developed the traditional model to understand mass communications in which a source transmits information to many receivers at one time—typically via a *broadcast* medium such as television. This perspective essentially views



When consumers opt in to receive information from an organization, they are more likely to pay attention to it when a message arrives.
Source: liliwhite/123RF.

advertising as the process of transferring information to the buyer before a sale. It regards a message as *perishable*—the marketer repeats the same message to a large audience and then the message "vanishes" when a new campaign takes its place. As we'll see, that model doesn't work as well now that we can *narrowcast*, or finely tune our messages to suit small groups of receivers (sometimes even one person at a time).

How long has it been since you posted to your Facebook page? Exciting technological and social developments make us rethink the picture of passive consumers as people increasingly play more proactive roles in communications. In other words, we are to a greater extent *partners*—rather than couch potatoes—in the communications process. Our input helps to shape the messages that we and others like us receive; furthermore, we may seek out these messages rather than sit home and wait to see them on TV or in the paper. For example, the popular social media platform *Pinterest* allows users to create digital scrapbooks, but in the process it serves as a voyage of discovery as people pull images from many sources (often other users' Boards). This kind of new medium allows consumers to "dream out loud" and also guide one another toward many new styles and brands.[45] Figure 8.4 illustrates this updated approach to interactive communications.

One of the early instigators of this communications revolution was the humble handheld remote control device. As VCRs (remember them?) began to be commonplace in homes, suddenly consumers had more input into what they wanted to watch—and when. No longer did the TV networks decide when we could watch our favorite shows, and we didn't have to miss the new episode of *Hawaii Five-O* because it was on at the same time as the Bears game.

Since that time, of course, our ability to control our media environment has mushroomed. Just ask some of the millions of us who use digital video recorders (DVRs) such as TiVo to watch TV shows whenever we wish—and who blithely skip over the commercials.[46] Many others have access to video-on-demand or pay-per-view TV. Home-shopping networks encourage us to call in and discuss our passion for cubic zirconium jewelry live on the air. Caller ID devices and voicemail allow us to decide if we will accept a phone call during dinner and to know if a telemarketer lurks on the other end before we pick up the phone. A bit of web surfing allows us to identify kindred spirits around the globe, to request information about products, and even to provide suggestions to product designers and market researchers.

The Source

Regardless of whether we receive a message by "snail mail" (netheads' slang for the postal service), email, or SMS text, common sense tells us that if different people say or write the same words, the message can still affect us differently. Researchers have

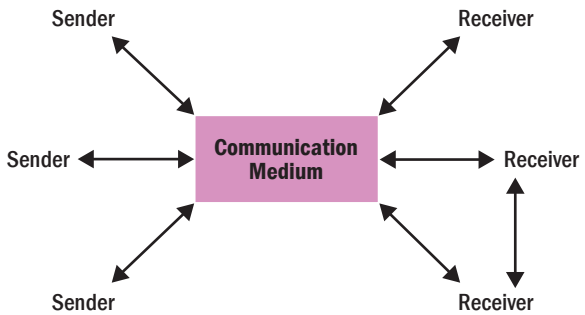


Figure 8.4 AN UPDATED COMMUNICATIONS MODEL

discussed the power of *source effects* for more than 70 years. When we attribute the same message to different sources and measure the degree of attitude change that occurs after listeners hear it, we can isolate which characteristics of a communicator cause attitude change.[47]

Under most conditions, the source of a message can have a big impact on the likelihood that receivers will accept it. Marketers can choose a spokesperson because she is an expert, attractive, famous, or even a "typical" consumer who is both likable and trustworthy. *Credibility* and *attractiveness* are two particularly important source characteristics (i.e., how much we either believe or like the communicator).[48]

How do marketing specialists decide whether to stress credibility or attractiveness when they select a message source? There should be a match between the needs of the recipient and the potential rewards the source offers. When this match occurs, the recipient is more motivated to process the message. An attractive source, for example, is more effective for receivers who tend to be sensitive about social acceptance and others' opinions, whereas a credible, expert source is more powerful when he or she speaks to internally oriented people.[49] However, even a credible source's trustworthiness evaporates if she endorses too many products.[50]

Source Credibility

Source credibility refers to a communicator's expertise, objectivity, or trustworthiness. This dimension relates to consumers' beliefs that this person is competent and that he or she will provide the necessary information we need when we evaluate competing products.

A credible source is particularly persuasive when the consumer has yet to learn much about a product or form an opinion of it.[51] Indeed, a study demonstrated that simply letting consumers know a firm is profitable leads them to put more stock in what the company says in its advertising.[52] On the other hand, some subtle cues can diminish credibility: Consider for example those super fast **disclaimers** you often hear at the end of a commercial message that supply additional information the advertiser is required to provide ("possible side effects may include nausea, diarrhea, or death"). Although people tend to assume that people who speak faster are more intelligent, they may trust them less. When consumers don't already have a positive attitude toward a product, a fast-paced disclaimer leads them to think the advertiser has ulterior motives and they trust the company less.[53]

The issue of source credibility has never been more important than it is today, when an explosion of **fake news**—hoaxes spread by hackers or other outsiders—has caused many people to question the trustworthiness of even the most respected traditional and social media outlets. Although the term has been around for more than a century, it has only recently come into the spotlight especially due to Russia's attempts to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election.[54]

Programs to disseminate false information have taken their toll on the American public; nearly two-thirds of the mainstream media publish fake news. Facebook's credibility also was damaged when it came out that purveyors of fake news had bought huge amounts of advertising on the platform, and that the company allowed advertisers to target very specific racist groups such as "Jew haters." Facebook is scrambling to repair the damage. It now offers a "Related Articles" tool so that readers can consult other sources to acquire more context about a story and reduce the frequency with which people share hoaxes. Even so, the ability of almost anyone to create a doctored video or to post a story that looks "authentic" creates a very big problem, and not just for politicians: Marketers now have to contend with even greater skepticism among consumers about whether what they read about product claims is fake news as well.[55]

Sincerity is particularly important when a company tries to publicize its *corporate social responsibility (CSR)* activities that benefit the community. As we saw in Chapter 2, a company's image can skyrocket when consumers believe it's genuinely doing good things. But this effort can backfire if people question the organization's motivations (e.g., if they think the firm spends more to talk about its good deeds than to actually do them).[56] Not too surprisingly, people who see deceptive advertising experience a feeling of distrust that carries over to other messages from that source and even to other sources because they are more likely to assume that advertising in general is not credible—a true case of poisoning the well for other marketers![57]

Although in general more positive sources tend to increase attitude change, there are exceptions to this rule. Sometimes we can think a source is obnoxious, yet it is still effective. A case in point is the irritating redhead in Wendy's commercials who says "Now That's Better." In some instances the differences in attitude change between positive sources and less-positive sources become erased over time. After a while, people appear to "forget" about the negative source and change their attitudes anyway. We call this process the **sleeper effect**.[58]

The source effects issue has gained even more attention recently as a result of a hot trend in marketing known as **native advertising**. This term refers to digital messages designed to blend into the editorial content of the publications in which they appear. The idea is to capture the attention of people who might resist ad messages that pop up in the middle of an article or program. These messages may look a lot like a regular article, but they often link to a sponsor's content. For example, Airbnb collaborated with *The New York Times* to produce an issue of the newspaper's *T* magazine (devoted to travel). It was dedicated to Ellis Island and showed how immigrants used to travel to New York in search of a new life. The campaign included old photos that highlighted the hospitality these visitors received—which is of course a benefit that Airbnb emphasizes to today's travelers.[59]

A consumer's beliefs about a product's attributes will weaken if he or she perceives that the source is biased.[63] **Knowledge bias** implies that a source's knowledge about a topic is not accurate. **Reporting bias** occurs when a source has the required knowledge but we question his or her willingness to convey it accurately—as when a racket manufacturer pays a star tennis player to use its products exclusively. The source's credentials might be appropriate, but the fact that consumers see the expert as a "hired gun" compromises believability.

Source Attractiveness: "What Is Beautiful Is Good"

A British dairy company enlisted Johnny Rotten, the lead singer of the Sex Pistols, to appear in a commercial (or *advert*, as they say in the United Kingdom) to promote its butter. Sales went up substantially when the punk legend plugged the product (rotten butter?).[64] **Source attractiveness** refers to the social *value* recipients attribute to a communicator. This value relates to the person's physical appearance, personality, social status, or similarity to the receiver (we like to listen to people who are like us). Our desire to know what our peers think helps to explain why both Facebook and Google now allow **shared endorsements**; users who follow or rate a product or service may find that their endorsements show up on the advertiser's page.[65]

Some sources like Johnny Rotten appeal to us because they are cool, brainy, or just plain famous. However, many simply are nice to look at. Almost everywhere we turn, beautiful people try to persuade us to buy or do something. As Chapter 6 showed us, our society places a high premium on physical attractiveness. We assume

The Tangled Web

In recent years we've witnessed a new attempt to manipulate attitudes that some call **sock puppeting**. This term describes a company executive or other biased source who poses as someone else as he or she touts the organization in social media. For example, it came to light that the CEO of Whole Foods had posted derogatory comments about rival Wild Oats without revealing his true identity. More recently, a nonprofit research organization called GiveWell that rates the effectiveness of charities had to discipline two of its founders who pretended to be other people on blogs and then referred people to the group's website.[60] A related problem is called **astroturfing**, which describes a company's attempts to write fake reviews of its products in the absence of real, "grassroots" support. Not enough glowing reviews for your new offering? Time to lay down the fake astroturf![61]

Another form of sock puppeting is so-called **paid influencer programs** that attempt to start online conversations about brands when they encourage bloggers to write about them. These "sponsored conversations" can be effective, but again marketers need to be careful about the potential to distort source recommendations. Panasonic flew bloggers to the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, where they posted about the show and Panasonic products unveiled there.[62]

that good-looking people are smarter, hipper, and happier than the rest of us. This is an example of a *halo effect*, which occurs when we assume that persons who rank high on one dimension excel on others as well. We can explain this effect in terms of the consistency principle we discussed previously in this chapter; we are more comfortable when all of our judgments about a person correspond.

As a result, physically attractive people often get a boost in life because people assume they excel on other dimensions as well. Occasionally this halo effect can backfire if observers infer that someone has exploited their attractiveness (e.g., women who get labeled as "gold diggers"). One study found that good-looking children are less likely to get assistance from adults (at least for fairly mild problems) because people assume they are more competent and thus better able to help themselves. One implication of this work is that ironically charitable organizations may want to consider using less attractive kids as models to solicit donations![66] Note: Psychologists also refer to the opposite, *forked-tail effect* that describes our assumptions that an unattractive person also isn't good at other things. There are a lot of angels and devils out there.

Star Power: Celebrities As Communications Sources

Celebrities hawk everything from grills (George Foreman) to perfumes (Jennifer Lopez). As our discussion about the consistency principle illustrates, these messages are more effective when there's a logical connection between the star and the product. When Bob Dylan pitches Victoria's Secret lingerie (yes, he really did), marketers may need to reread their consumer behavior textbook.[67] Then again, teen idol Justin Bieber puts his name on almost everything . . . including nail polish![68]

Star power works because celebrities embody *cultural meanings*—they symbolize important categories like status and social class: A "working-class hero" (Mike of *Mike & Molly*), gender (the effeminate Cam on *Modern Family*), age (the youthful President Grant on *Scandal*), and even personality types (the nerdy Sheldon on *The Big Bang Theory*, cool Adam Levine on *The Voice*). Ideally, the advertiser decides what meanings the product should convey (that is, how it should position the item in the marketplace) and then chooses a celebrity who embodies a similar meaning. The product's meaning thus moves from the manufacturer to the consumer, using the star as a vehicle.[69]

Marketing Pitfall

Celebrities (and their managers) don't necessarily jump at the chance to endorse just any product. After all, they have a brand image to protect as well. For years one popular strategy has been to film commercials overseas and stipulate that they are not to air at home. The practice is so widespread in Japan that one website even coined a term to describe it: *Japander* (a combination of Japanese and pandering): "a western star who uses his or her fame to make large sums of money in a short time by advertising products in Japan that they would probably never use . . . *(see sinecure [sic.], prostitute)* . . . to make an ass of oneself in Japanese media." Check out japander.com to see actors such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, George Clooney, and Jennifer Aniston in commercials they'd prefer their U.S. fans didn't see.[70]

Nonhuman Endorsers

A celebrity endorsement strategy has its drawbacks. As we previously noted, stars' motives may be suspect if they plug products that don't fit their images or if consumers begin to believe the celebrities never met a product they didn't like (for a fee). They may be involved in a scandal or deviate from a brand's desired image; many athletes—think Lance Armstrong, Michael Phelps, Kobe Bryant, and Maria Sharapova—get signed to lucrative endorsement deals, then fail drug tests or otherwise get into trouble.[71] Oops.

For these reasons, some marketers seek alternative sources, including cartoon characters and mascots. As the marketing director for a company that manufactures costumed characters for sports teams and businesses points out, "You don't have to worry about your mascot checking into rehab."[72] Researchers report that **spokescharacters**, such as the Pillsbury Doughboy, Chester Cheetah, and the GEICO Gecko, do, in fact, boost viewers' recall of claims that ads make and also yield higher brand attitudes.[73] Some of the most popular spokescharacters in recent years include Snoopy (MetLife), Sasquatch (Jack Link's Beef Jerky), Allstate's Mayhem Man, Grumpy Cat (Grenade Coffee's Grumppuccino iced drink), and that old stand-by The Pillsbury Doughboy.[74]



Spokescharacters boost the effectiveness of advertising claims.
Source: Pat Canova/Alamy Stock Photo.

The Message

Subtle aspects of the way a source delivers a message can influence our interpretation of what he or she says. For example, if a source refers to the brand as "you," "we," or more abstractly "the brand" this changes how people feel about the product. A more intimate reference can bolster feelings about brands with whom the consumer has a positive relationship, but it can also be off-putting if it's inconsistent with how the person feels about the product.[75]

Even the layout in a print ad sends a message about how the consumer should relate to the advertised item. A brand that wants customers to see it as a "friend" by depicting a model using it is more effective when the product image appears horizontally and near the model. On the other hand, if a brand wants customers to see it as a "leader" the advertiser will have better luck if it physically places the brand above the user and farther away "(it's lonely at the top).[76]

TABLE 8.2 Characteristics of Good and Bad Messages

Positive effects	Negative effects
Showing convenience of use	Extensive information on components, ingredients, or nutrition
Showing new product or improved features	Outdoor setting (message gets lost)
Casting background (i.e., people are incidental to message)	Large number of on-screen characters
Indirect comparison to other products	Graphic displays
Demonstration of the product in use	
Demonstration of tangible results (e.g., bouncy hair)	
An actor playing the role of an ordinary person	
No principal character (i.e., more time is devoted to the product)	

Source: Adapted from David W. Stewart and David H. Furse, "The Effects of Television Advertising Execution on Recall, Comprehension, and Persuasion," *Psychology & Marketing* 2 (Fall 1985): 135–60. Copyright © 1985 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

A major study of more than 1,000 commercials identified factors that determine whether a commercial message will be persuasive. The single most important feature: Does the communication stress a unique attribute or benefit of the product?[77] Table 8.2 lists some other good and bad elements of commercial messages.

Characteristics of the message itself help determine its impact on attitudes. These variables include *how* we say the message as well as *what* we say. Depending on the marketer's objectives and the nature of the product, different kinds of messages produce different results. A marketer faces some crucial issues when he or she creates a message. Let's look at some of the biggies:

Should We Use Pictures or Words?

The saying "One picture is worth a thousand words" captures the idea that visuals are effective, especially when the communicator wants to influence receivers' emotional responses. For this reason, advertisers often rely on vivid illustrations or photography.[78]

However, a picture is not always as effective when it communicates factual information. Ads that contain the same information elicit different reactions when the marketer presents them in visual versus verbal form. The verbal version affects ratings on the utilitarian aspects of a product, whereas the visual version affects aesthetic evaluations. Verbal elements are more effective when an accompanying picture reinforces them, especially if they *frame* the illustration (the message in the picture strongly relates to the copy).[79]

Because it requires more effort to process, a verbal message is most appropriate for high-involvement situations, such as print contexts where the reader really pays attention to the advertising. Verbal material decays more rapidly in memory, so these messages require more frequent exposures to obtain the desired effect. Visual images, in contrast, allow the receiver to *chunk* information at the time of encoding (see Chapter 4). Chunking results in a stronger memory trace that aids retrieval over time.[80]

Should We Repeat the Message?

Repetition can be a double-edged sword for marketers. As we noted in Chapter 4, we usually need multiple exposures to a stimulus before learning occurs. Contrary to the saying "familiarity breeds contempt," people tend to like things that are more familiar to them, even if they were not that keen on them initially.[81] Psychologists call this the **mere exposure phenomenon**.

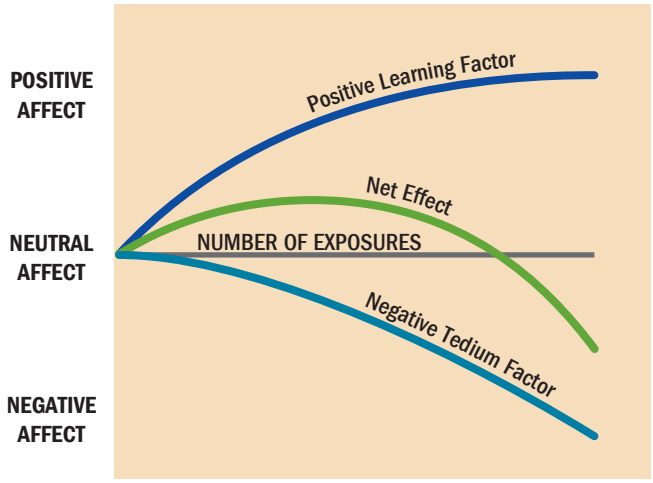


Figure 8.5 TWO-FACTOR THEORY OF MESSAGE REPETITION

Advertisers find positive effects for repetition even in mature product categories: Repeating product information boosts consumers' awareness of the brand, even though the marketer says nothing new.[82] However, as we saw in Chapter 6, too much repetition creates *habituation*, whereby the consumer no longer pays attention to the stimulus because of fatigue or boredom. Excessive exposure can cause advertising wear-out, which can result in negative reactions to an ad after we see it too much.[83] Research evidence indicates that "three's the charm" when it comes to exposing an audience to a product claim. Additional messages tend to trigger skepticism and actually reverse any positive impact.[84]

The **two-factor theory** explains the fine line between familiarity and boredom; it proposes that two separate psychological processes operate when we repeatedly show an ad to a viewer. The positive side of repetition is that it increases familiarity and thus reduces uncertainty about the product. The negative side is that over time boredom increases with each exposure. At some point the amount of boredom exceeds the amount of uncertainty the message reduces, and this results in wear-out. Figure 8.5 depicts this pattern. Its effect is especially pronounced when each exposure is of a fairly long duration (such as a 30-second commercial).[85]

The two-factor perspective implies that advertisers can overcome this problem if they limit the amount of exposure per repetition (e.g., use 15-second spots instead of longer commercials). They can also maintain familiarity but alleviate boredom if they slightly vary the content of ads over time—although each spot differs, the campaign still revolves around a common theme. Recipients who see varied ads about the product absorb more information about product attributes and experience more positive thoughts about the brand than do those who see the same information repeatedly. This additional information also allows the person to resist attempts to change his or her attitude in the face of a counterattack by a competing brand.[86]

How Do We Structure the Argument?

Many marketing messages are like debates or trials: A source presents an argument and tries to convince the receiver to shift his or her opinion. As you've no doubt guessed, the *way* we present the argument may be as important as *what* we say. It's often a good idea to relate the product to a person's identity to ramp up involvement as we discussed in Chapter 5.

On the other hand, there's the temptation to push too hard. A study shows how that can happen: Respondents were asked to focus on their attitudes toward environmental

Net Profit

The Pandora music site attracts about 70 million listeners, who tune in to playlists Pandora creates based on their initial preferences for certain artists. The site uses a music intelligence algorithm to dissect the characteristics of favorite songs and serve up others that are similar. Pandora's engineers constantly tweak the playlists as they experiment with variations of the experience. For example, do listeners want to hear mostly familiar songs, or do they want to discover new music? One of the biggest issues they wrestle with: How frequently should Pandora repeat the same song or artist in a playlist? The site constantly tries new variations to arrive at the optimal number of repetitions, but it turns out a lot depends on other factors such as the time of day and where listeners are when they tune in. For example, Pandora's data show that users welcome new music instead of the same old, same old, but when they're at work not so much. The company continues to tweak its algorithm as it tries to answer the elusive question, "Can you have too much of a good thing?"[87]

issues to activate that aspect of their identities. Then they were divided into three groups, each of which was shown a separate slogan for Charlie's Soap, a real biodegradeable cleanser. One message just said the soap was "a good choice for consumers." A second version related to the issue by calling the soap "a good choice for green consumers." The third message pushed the envelope farther: "the only choice for green consumers!" Although many real managers predicted that the last choice would be most effective, in fact the second one was most effective because the last choice just pushed too hard.[88] Another study echoes the importance of the light touch: The researchers showed magazine advertisements to a total of more than 1,000 participants. The verdict was clear: Ads that were less assertive were more effective So, take it easy.[89]

Most messages merely present one or more positive attributes about the product or reasons to buy it. These are *supportive arguments*. An alternative is to use a *two-sided message*, in which the message presents both positive and negative information. Research indicates that two-sided ads can be quite effective, yet marketers rarely use them.[90]

Why would a marketer want to devote advertising space to publicize a product's negative attributes? Under the right circumstances, **refutational arguments** that first raise a negative issue and then dismiss it can be quite effective. This approach increases source credibility because it reduces *reporting bias*; this means that the receiver assumes the source has carefully considered both sides of the argument. Also, people who are skeptical about the product may be more receptive to a balanced argument instead of a "whitewash."[91] For example, after General Motors declared bankruptcy, an ad declared: "Let's be completely honest: No company wants to go through this."[92] Research evidence indicates that when experts have strong arguments on their side, they are actually more effective if they express some uncertainty rather than stating unequivocally that they are correct.[93]

This doesn't mean the marketer should go overboard and confess to major problems with the product (though hopefully there aren't any major ones to admit to). The typical refutational strategy discusses relatively minor attributes that may present a problem or fall short when the customer compares a product to competitors. Positive, important attributes then refute these drawbacks. For example, Avis got a lot of mileage when it claimed to be only the "No. 2" car rental company, whereas an ad for Volkswagen woefully described one of its cars as a "lemon" because there was a scratch on the glove compartment chrome strip.[94] A two-sided strategy appears to be the most effective when the audience is well educated (and presumably more impressed by a balanced argument).[95] It is also best to use when receivers are not already loyal to the product—"preaching to the choir" about possible drawbacks may raise doubts unnecessarily.

Should We Compare Our Product to Our Competitors'?

Way back in 1971 the FTC issued guidelines that encouraged advertisers to name competing brands in their ads. The government did this to improve the information available to consumers in ads, and indeed recent evidence indicates that, at least under some conditions, this type of presentation does result in more informed decision making.[96] However, advertisers need to tread lightly, especially when they risk ruffling the feathers of other companies. Fox rejected a commercial that Sodastream submitted for the Super Bowl because the actress Scarlett Johansson sensually sips her homemade soda and says, "Sorry, Coke and Pepsi."[97]

Comparative advertising refers to a message that compares two or more recognizable brands and weighs them in terms of one or more specific attributes.[98] Sometimes these attempts at persuasion attack the brand's own messages rather than specifics of the product. For example, Axe recently poked fun at rival Old Spice's popular campaign that features The Old Spice Guy Isaiah Mustafa on horseback when it erected a billboard that proclaimed, "For Men Who'd Rather be With a Woman than on a Horse."

This strategy can cut both ways, especially if the sponsor depicts the competition in a nasty or negative way. Although some comparative ads result in desired attitude changes, they may also be lower in believability and stir up **source derogation** (i.e., the consumer may doubt the credibility of a biased presentation).[99] Indeed, in some cultures (such as Asia), comparative advertising is rare because people find such a confrontational approach offensive.[100]

New Message Formats: The Social Media Revolution

The novel "ice-bucket challenge" that swept the internet a few years ago was a novel way to harness social media for a good cause; the movement that asked people to take a selfie of themselves dousing their heads in a bucket of ice water went viral and raised more than $115 million for A.L.S. research. Researchers explain this success by pointing to several elements of the message including: the 24-hour deadline to either take the cold shower or pay the money (a specific



The "ice-bucket challenge" that swept the internet was a novel way to harness social media for a good cause.
Source: Jurgen Falchle/Fotolia.

goal as opposed to a more abstract one); the public nature of the challenge that allowed participants to share their selfies online; and the slight amount of self-sacrifice that was involved. Yes, people tend to donate more money when they have to suffer a bit for the cause; researchers label this the **martyrdom effect**. As one put it, "We're supposed to prefer pleasure to pain but, when it comes to charity, you don't hear about massage-a-thons or dessert-a-thons."[101]

Reality Engineering

The Pennsylvania city of Altoona temporarily renamed itself "POM Wonderful Presents: The Greatest Movie Ever Sold" to promote a popular movie that parodies product-placement advertising; the movie's producers sold the title to the maker of POM Wonderful pomegranate juice for $1 million.[102] **Reality engineering** occurs when marketers appropriate elements of popular culture and use them as promotional vehicles.[103] It's hard to know what's real anymore; specialists even create "used jeans" when they apply chemical washes, sandpaper, and other techniques to make a new pair of jeans look like they're ready for retirement. The industry has a term for this practice that sums up the contradiction: *new vintage*![104]

The grassroots efforts we often witness today to capture our attention epitomize **guerrilla marketing**: Promotional strategies that use unconventional means and venues to encourage word of mouth about products. This has nothing to do with monkey business; the term implies that the marketer "ambushes" the unsuspecting recipient because the message pops up in a place where he or she wasn't expecting to see an advertisement. These campaigns often recruit legions of real consumers who agree to engage in some kind of street theater or perhaps place messages in unconventional locations such as public restrooms or on city sidewalks to get in the face of media-saturated consumers.

Reality engineers have many tools at their disposal; they plant products in movies, pump scents into offices and stores, attach video monitors in the backs of taxicabs, buy ad space on police patrol cars, or film faked "documentaries" such as *The Blair Witch Project*.[105] This process is accelerating: Historical analyses of Broadway plays, best-selling novels, and the lyrics of hit songs, for example, clearly show large increases in the use of real brand names over time.[106]

Here are some examples of reality engineering:

- Mattel announced that it was putting a "for sale" sign on the Barbie Malibu Dreamhouse, where the doll character supposedly has lived in comfort since the introduction of Malibu Barbie in 1971. The campaign mixed actual and imaginary elements. A section of the real estate website Trulia carried the for-sale listing that described the property as "the dreamiest of dream houses."[107]
- The Quill.com division of the office supply retail chain Staples carries a line of products from the Dunder Mifflin Paper Company of Scranton, Pennsylvania. As any fan knows, that is the fictional setting of the TV show *The Office*, which was on the air for nine seasons.[108]
- The Coachella music festival made headlines with a "virtual performance" (via hologram) of the deceased performer Tupac Shakur. YouTube reported more than 15 million views of the spectacle within 48 hours, and Tupac's greatest hits album made the *Billboard 200* for the first time in 12 years. Plans are underway to debut holograms of other dead stars including Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson.[109]
- A New York couple funded their $80,000 wedding by selling corporate plugs; they inserted coupons in their programs and tossed 25 bouquets from 1-800-FLOWERS.

Product Placement

A video for the single *I Dare You* by The xx doubles as a seven-minute promo for Calvin Klein clothes. The three band members appear alongside teenage stars from shows like *Stranger Things* who also have appeared in CK ads. Target stores played a role in episodes of the CW's *Jane the Virgin* TV show and a Toyota car was written into the plot of an episode of ABC's *Modern Family*.[110]

That's quite a change; in the not-so-distant past, TV networks demanded that producers "geek" (alter) brand names before they appeared in a show, as when *Melrose Place* changed a Nokia cell phone to a "Nokio."[111] Today, real products pop up everywhere. Well-established brands lend an aura of realism to the action, while upstarts benefit tremendously from the exposure. In the movie version of *Sex and the City*, Carrie's assistant admits that she "borrows" her pricey handbags from a rental website called Bag Borrow or Steal. The company's head of marketing commented about the mention, "It's like the *Good Housekeeping* Seal of Approval. It gives us instant credibility and recognition."[112]

Bag Borrow or Steal got a free plug (oops, they got another one here!). In many cases, however, these "plugs" are no accident. **Product placement** is the insertion of real products in fictional movies, TV shows, books, and plays. Many types of products play starring (or at least supporting) roles in our culture; the most visible brands in recent years include Dell, Samsung, Apple, Chevrolet, and Ray-Ban. In each case their exposure in media earned them the equivalent of between $6 and 16 million.[113]

Product placement is by no means a casual process: Marketers pay about $25 billion per year to plug their brands in TV and movies. Several firms specialize in arranging these appearances; if they're lucky, they manage to do it on the cheap when they get a client's product noticed by prop masters who work on the shows. For example, in a cafeteria scene during an episode of *Grey's Anatomy*, it was no coincidence that the character Izzie Stevens happened to drink a bottle of Izze Sparkling Pomegranate fruit beverage. The placement company that represents PepsiCo paid nothing to insert the prop in that case, but it probably didn't get off so easily when the new brand also showed up in HBO's *Entourage* and CBS's *The Big Bang Theory* and *The New Adventures of Old Christine*.[114]

Today, most major releases brim with real products, even though a majority of consumers believe the line between advertising and programming is becoming too fuzzy and distracting (though as we might expect, concerns about this blurring of boundaries are more pronounced among older people than younger).[115] A study reported that consumers respond well to placements when the show's plot makes the product's benefit clear. Similarly, audiences had a favorable impression when a retailer provided furniture, clothes, appliances, and other staples for the struggling families who get help on ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.[116]

Some researchers claim that product placement aids consumer decision making because the familiarity of these props creates a sense of cultural belonging while they generate feelings of emotional security. Another study found that placements consistent with a show's plot do enhance brand attitudes, but incongruent placements that aren't consistent with the plot affect brand attitudes *negatively* because they seem out of place.[117]

Advergaming

In the video game *Crazy Taxi*, you can pull into a KFC for a quick bucket. A version of the popular game *Doom*, known as *Chex Quest*, dialed down the violence level but increased sales of Chex cereal by over 200%. The characters in *Mario Kart 8* drive Mercedes.[118]

About three-quarters of U.S. consumers now play video games, yet to many marketers the idea of integrating their brands with the stories that games tell is still a well-kept secret. Others, including Axe, Mini Cooper, and Burger King, have figured this out: They create game narratives that immerse players in the action. Orbitz offers playable banner-games that result in the highest click-through rate of any kind of advertising the online travel site does.

The future is bright for **advergaming**, where online games merge with interactive advertisements that let companies target specific types of consumers. These placements can be short exposures such as a billboard that appears around a racetrack, or they can take the form of branded entertainment and integrate the brand directly into the action. The mushrooming popularity of user-generated videos on YouTube and other sites creates a growing market to link ads to these sources as well. This strategy is growing so rapidly that there's even a new (trademarked) term for it. "**Plinking"** is the act of embedding a product or service link in a video.

Types of Message Appeals

A persuasive message can tug at the heartstrings or scare you, make you laugh, make you cry, or leave you yearning to learn more. In this section, we'll review the major alternatives available to communicators.

Emotional Versus Rational Appeals

Colgate-Palmolive's Total brand was the first toothpaste to claim that it fights gingivitis, a benefit that let Colgate inch ahead of Procter & Gamble's Crest for the first time in decades. Colgate initially made a scientific pitch for its new entry because it emphasized Total's germ-fighting abilities. In newer ads, however, former model Brooke Shields cavorted with two children (not hers) as soft music played in the background. She stated, "Having a healthy smile is important to me. Not just as an actress but as a mom."[119]

So, which is better: to appeal to the head or to the heart? The answer often depends on the nature of the product and the type of relationship consumers have with it. It's hard to gauge the precise effects of rational versus emotional appeals. Although recall of ad content tends to be better for "thinking" ads than for "feeling" ads, conventional measures of advertising effectiveness (e.g., day-after recall) may not be adequate to assess cumulative effects of emotional ads. These open-ended measures assess cognitive responses, and they may penalize feeling ads because the reactions are not as easy to articulate.[120]

Sex Appeals

A risqué ad campaign for Kraft's Zesty Italian salad dressing attracted the attention of a conservative activist group called One Million Moms. Members took to the web to protest a print ad featuring a hunky male model having a naked picnic. The group stated, "Last week's issue of *People* magazine had the most disgusting ad on the inside front cover that we have ever seen Kraft produce. A full 2-page ad features a naked man lying on a picnic blanket with only a small portion of the blanket barely covering his genitals. It is easy to see what the ad is really selling." Kraft responded, "Our Kraft dressing's 'Let's Get Zesty' campaign is a playful and flirtatious way to reach our consumers. People have overwhelmingly said they're enjoying the campaign and having fun with it."[121] Apparently not everyone.

Echoing the widely held belief that "sex sells," many marketing communications for products from perfumes to autos feature heavy doses of erotic suggestions that range from subtle hints to blatant displays of skin. Nestlé recently took over a coffee

shop in a trendy Manhattan neighborhood, and models in head to toe body paint—and nothing else—replaced the usual *baristas* to plug the company's "all natural" creamer product.[122] This example of a **sex appeal** should wake you up even if you drink decaf.

Perhaps not surprisingly, female nudity in print ads generates negative feelings and tension among female consumers, whereas men's reactions are more positive—although women with more liberal attitudes toward sex are more likely to be receptive.[123] In a case of turnabout being fair play, another study found that males dislike nude males in ads, whereas females responded well to undressed males—but not totally nude ones like the guy in the Kraft ad.[124] Women also respond more positively to sexual themes when they occur in the context of a committed relationship rather than just gratuitous lust.[125]

So, does sex work? Although erotic content does appear to draw attention to an ad, its use may actually be counterproductive. In one survey, an overwhelming 61 percent of the respondents said that sexual imagery in a product's ad makes them *less* likely to buy it.[126] Ironically, a provocative picture can be *too* effective; it can attract so much attention as to hinder processing and recall of the ad's contents. Sexual appeals appear to be ineffective when marketers use them merely as a "trick" to grab attention. They do, however, appear to work when the product is *itself* related to sex (e.g., lingerie or Viagra).[127] In general, a recent study's findings sum up the impact of sex appeals: Yes, they get noticed and remembered but many viewers don't recall what the ad was plugging. And, males do like provocative messages more than females, but this doesn't translate into stronger brand attitudes.[128]

Another study looked specifically at the issue of whether sexy ads increase desire for romantic products. According to human evolutionary theory, men tend to be primed to take advantage of sexual opportunities whenever they are reasonably available as relationships with multiple partners maximizes the likelihood that their genes will be passed on. Therefore, the researchers reasoned, they should dislike objects that don't help them to achieve this goal. Sure enough, when male subjects saw highly sexual ads, they reported less interest in joining the long-term dating site eHarmony.com or buying jewelry from Kay Jewelers. This diminished interest did not occur for female subjects. The study's findings jibe with concerns others have raised that excessive exposure to pornography and fantasizing about unrealistic sex can dilute men's interest in romantic dating.[129]

Humor Appeals

A TV commercial for Metamucil showed a National Park Service ranger who pours a glass of the laxative down Old Faithful and announces that the product keeps the famous geyser "regular." Yellowstone National Park started getting letters from offended viewers. Park officials also had their own concerns: They didn't want people to think that the geyser needed "help" or that it's okay to throw things down into it![130]

Do **humor appeals** work? Overall, funny advertisements do get attention. One study found that recognition scores for *humorous* liquor ads were better than average. However, the verdict is mixed as to whether humor affects recall or product attitudes in a significant way.[131] One reason silly ads may shift opinions is that they provide a source of *distraction*. A funny ad inhibits **counterarguing** (in which a consumer thinks of reasons why he or she doesn't agree with the message); this increases the likelihood of message acceptance because the consumer doesn't come up with arguments against the product.[132]

Fear Appeals

Volkswagen's advertising campaign to promote the safety of its Jetta model really got people's attention. The spots depict graphic car crashes from the

perspective of the passengers who chatter away as they drive down the street. Without warning, other vehicles come out of nowhere and brutally smash into their cars. In one spot, viewers see a passenger's head striking an airbag. The spots end with shots of stunned passengers, the damaged Jetta, and the slogan: "Safe happens." The ads look so realistic that consumers called the company to ask if any of the actors were hurt.[133]

Fear appeals emphasize the negative consequences that can occur unless the consumer changes a behavior or an attitude. These types of messages are fairly common in advertising, although they are more common in social marketing contexts in which organizations encourage people to convert to healthier lifestyles by quitting smoking, using contraception, or relying on a designated driver. Several countries including the United States are looking at tough new guidelines for cigarette advertising and packaging. These options include requiring a range of horrific images to appear directly on the cigarette packaging (and in cigarette ads) to show people who have suffered from the ravages of cigarettes, such as a man with cigarette smoke coming out of a tracheotomy hole in his throat or a cadaver on an autopsy table.[134]

This tactic, if and when it's implemented, may well scare away would-be smokers, but do fear appeals work more generally? Most research on this topic indicates that these negative messages are most effective when the advertiser uses only a moderate threat and when the ad presents a solution to the problem. Otherwise, consumers will tune out the ad because they can do nothing to solve or avoid the threat.[135]

The Message as Art Form: Metaphors Be with You

Just like novelists, poets, and artists, marketers are storytellers. Their communications take the form of stories because they describe intangible product benefits. The storyteller, therefore, must express these in some concrete form so that consumers will get the message.

Advertising creatives rely (consciously or not) on well-known literary devices to communicate these meanings. For example, characters such as Mr. Goodwrench, the Jolly Green Giant, and Charlie the Tuna may personify a product or service. Many ads take the form of an **allegory**, which is a story about an abstract trait or concept that advertisers tell in the context of a person, animal, vegetable, or object.

A **metaphor** places two dissimilar objects into a close relationship such that "A is B," whereas a **simile** compares two objects, "A is like B." A and B, however dissimilar, share some quality that the metaphor highlights. Metaphors allow the marketer to apply meaningful images to everyday events. In the stock market, "white knights" battle "hostile raiders" with the help of "poison pills"; Tony the Tiger equates cereal with strength; and "you're in good hands with Allstate" insurance.[136]

Resonance is another type of literary device advertisers frequently use. It is a form of presentation that combines a play on words with a relevant picture. Whereas metaphor substitutes one meaning for another by connecting two things that are in some way similar, resonance employs an element that has a double meaning—such as a *pun,* in which two words sound similar but have different meanings. For example, an ad for a diet strawberry shortcake dessert might bear the copy "berried treasure" so that the brand conveys qualities we associate with buried treasure such as valuable and hidden. Because the text departs from expectations, it creates a state of tension or uncertainty on the part of the viewer until he or she figures out the wordplay. Once the consumer "gets it," he or she may prefer the ad to a more straightforward message.[137]

Just as a novelist or artist can tell a story in words or pictures, we can choose several ways to address our consumer audiences. Advertisers structure commercials like other art forms; as we've seen, they borrow conventions from literature and art to communicate.[138] One important distinction is between a *drama* and a *lecture*.[139] A lecture is like a speech: The source speaks directly to the audience to inform them about a product or to persuade them to buy it. Because a lecture clearly implies an attempt at persuasion, the audience will regard it as such. Assuming it motivates listeners, they weigh the merits of the message along with the source's credibility. Cognitive responses occur (e.g., "How much did Coke pay him to say that?"). Consumers accept the appeal if it overcomes objections and is consistent with their beliefs.

The Source Versus the Message: Do We Sell the Steak or the Sizzle?

We've discussed two major components of the communications model: the source and the message. At the end of the day, which component persuades consumers to change their attitudes? Should we worry more about *what* we say or *how* we say it and *who* says it?

Surprise! The answer is it depends. As we saw in Chapter 5, consumers' level of involvement determines which cognitive processes will activate when they receive a message. This in turn influences which aspects of a communication they process. Like travelers who come to a fork in the road, they choose one path or the other. The direction they take determines which aspects of the marketing communication will work and which will fall on deaf ears.

The **Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)** assumes that, under conditions of high involvement, we take the *central route* to persuasion. Under conditions of low involvement, we take a *peripheral route* instead. Figure 8.6 diagrams this model.[140]

The Central Route to Persuasion

According to the ELM, when we find the information in a persuasive message relevant or interesting, we pay careful attention to it. In this event, we focus on the arguments the marketer presents and generate *cognitive responses* to this content.

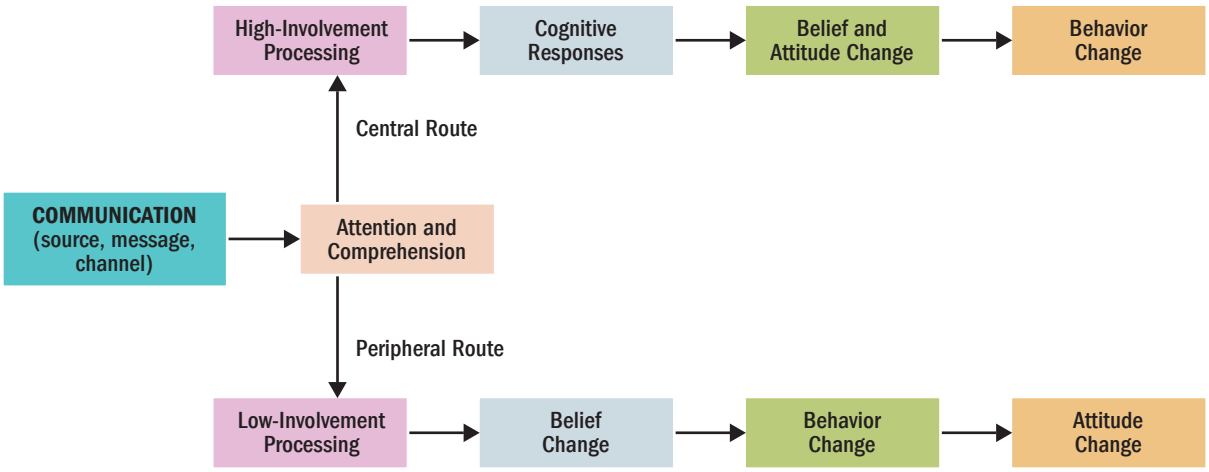


Figure 8.6 THE ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL (ELM) OF PERSUASION

An expectant mother who hears a radio message that warns about drinking while pregnant might say to herself, "She's right. I really should stop drinking alcohol now that I'm pregnant." Or she might offer counterarguments, such as, "That's a bunch of baloney. My mother had a cocktail every night when she was pregnant with me, and I turned out fine." If people generate counterarguments in response to a message, it's less likely that they will yield to the message, whereas if they generate further supporting arguments, it's more likely they'll comply.[141]

The central route to persuasion involves the standard hierarchy of effects we discussed earlier in this chapter. Recall this assumes that we carefully form and evaluate beliefs; the strong attitudes that result in turn guide our behavior. The implication is that message factors, such as the quality of arguments an ad presents, will determine attitude change. Prior knowledge about a topic results in more thoughts about the message and also increases the number of counterarguments.[142]

The Peripheral Route to Persuasion

In contrast, we take the peripheral route when we're not really motivated to think about the marketer's arguments. Instead, we're likely to use other cues to decide how to react to the message. These cues include the product's package, the attractiveness of the source, or the context in which the message appears. We call sources of information extraneous to the actual message *peripheral cues* because they surround the actual message.

The peripheral route to persuasion highlights the **paradox of low involvement**: When we *don't* care as much about a product, the way it's presented (e.g., who endorses it or the visuals that go with it) increases in importance. The implication here is that we may buy low-involvement products chiefly because the marketer designs a "sexy" package, chooses a popular spokesperson, or creates a stimulating shopping environment. In other words, especially when a consumer engages in emotional or behavioral decision making, these environmental cues become more important than when he or she performs cognitive decision making; as a result, he or she looks more carefully at the product's performance or other objective attributes.

To recap, the basic idea of the ELM is that highly involved consumers look for the "steak" (e.g., strong, rational arguments). Those who are less involved go for the "sizzle" (e.g., the colors and images in packaging or famous people's endorsements). It is important to remember, however, that the *same* communications variable can be both a central and a peripheral cue, depending on its relation to the attitude object. The physical attractiveness of a model might serve as a peripheral cue in a car commercial, but her beauty might be a central cue for a product such as shampoo where a major product benefit is to enhance attractiveness.[143]

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. It is important for consumer researchers to understand the nature and power of attitudes.

An *attitude* is a predisposition to evaluate an object or product positively or negatively. We form attitudes toward products and services, and these attitudes often determine whether we will purchase or not.

Three components make up an attitude: beliefs, affect, and behavioral intentions.

Attitude researchers traditionally assumed that we learn attitudes in a fixed sequence: First we form beliefs (*cognitions*) about an attitude object, then we evaluate that object (*affect*), and then we take some action (*behavior*). Depending on the consumer's level of involvement and the circumstances, though, his attitudes can result from other hierarchies of effects as well. A key to attitude formation is the function the attitude holds for the consumer (e.g., is it utilitarian or ego defensive?).

2. We form attitudes in several ways.

One organizing principle of attitude formation is the importance of consistency among attitudinal components—that is, we alter some parts of an attitude to be in line with others. Such theoretical approaches to attitudes as cognitive dissonance theory, self-perception theory, and balance theory stress the vital role of our need for consistency.

Multiattribute attitude models underscore the complexity of attitudes: They specify that we identify and combine a set of beliefs and evaluations to predict an overall attitude. Researchers integrate factors such as subjective norms and the specificity of attitude scales into attitude measures to improve predictability.

3. Persuasion involves an active attempt to change attitudes.

The communications model specifies the elements marketers need to transmit meaning. These include a source, a message, a medium, a receiver, and feedback.

The traditional view of communications regards the perceiver as a passive element in the process. New developments in interactive communications highlight the need to consider the active roles a consumer plays when he or she obtains product information and builds a relationship with a company. Advocates of permission marketing argue that it's more effective to send messages to consumers who have already indicated an interest in learning about a product than trying to hit people "cold" with these solicitations.

Two important characteristics that determine the effectiveness of a source are its attractiveness and credibility.

Some elements of a message that help to determine its effectiveness include the following: communication of the message in words or pictures; employment of an emotional or a rational appeal; frequency of repetition; conclusion drawing; presentation of both sides of the argument; and inclusion of fear, humor, or sexual references. Advertising messages often incorporate elements from art or literature, such as dramas, lectures, metaphors, allegories, and resonance.

Reality engineering occurs when marketers appropriate elements of popular culture to use in their promotional strategies.

The relative influence of the source versus the message depends on the receiver's level of involvement with the communication. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) specifies that source effects are more likely to sway a less-involved consumer, whereas a more-involved consumer will be more likely to attend to and process components of the actual message.

KEY TERMS

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REVIEW

8-1 How can an attitude play an ego-defensive function?

8-2 Describe the ABC model of attitudes.

8-3 List the three hierarchies of attitudes, and describe the major differences among them.

8-4 How do levels of commitment to an attitude influence the likelihood that it will become part of the way we think about a product in the long term?

8-5 We sometimes enhance our attitude toward a product after we buy it. How does the theory of cognitive dissonance explain this change?

8-6 What is the foot-in-the-door technique? How does self-perception theory relate to this effect?

8-7 According to balance theory, how can we tell if a triad is balanced or unbalanced? How can consumers restore balance to an unbalanced triad?

8-8 Describe a multiattribute attitude model and list its key components.

8-9 "Do as I say, not as I do." How does this statement relate to attitude models?

8-10 What is a subjective norm, and how does it influence our attitudes?

8-11 What are three obstacles to predicting behavior even if we know a person's attitudes?

8-12 Describe the Theory of Reasoned Action. Why might it not be equally valuable when we apply it to non-Western cultures?

8-13 List three psychological principles related to persuasion.

8-14 Describe the elements of the traditional communications model, and tell how the updated model differs.

8-15 What is source credibility, and what are two factors that influence our decision as to whether a source is credible?

8-16 What is a halo effect, and why does it happen?

8-17 Marketers must decide whether to incorporate rational or emotional appeals in a communications strategy. Describe conditions that are more favorable to one or the other.

8-18 When should a marketer present a message visually versus verbally?

8-19 How does the Two-Factor Theory explain the effects of message repetition on attitude change?

8-20 Do humorous ads work? If so, under what conditions?

8-21 Why do marketers use metaphors to craft persuasive messages? Give two examples of this technique.

8-22 What is the difference between a lecture and a drama?

8-23 Describe the Elaboration Likelihood Model, and summarize how it relates to the relative importance of *what* is said versus *how* it's said.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

8-24 The chapter states that the large majority of Americans no longer trust the accuracy of what they see in mainstream media. Do you agree? What are the ramifications of this distrust for marketers, and how might they improve the situation?

8-25 An antismoking ad sponsored by the New York City Department of Health crossed the line for many viewers. The spot showed a young boy who cries hysterically as a crowd of adults walk by him. The voiceover says, "This is how your child feels after losing you for a minute. Just imagine if they lost you for life." The ad aroused a lot of controversy because it wasn't clear if the child was merely acting or if the spot's producers provoked his tears for the camera. Is this genre of "scared straight" advertising an effective way to convince people to curb unhealthy behaviors like smoking?

8-26 The Coca-Cola Company pulled a U.K. internet promotion campaign after parents accused it of targeting children by using references to a notorious pornographic movie. As part of its efforts to reach young social media users for its Dr. Pepper brand, the company took over consenting users' Facebook status boxes. Then, the company would post mildly embarrassing questions such as "Lost my special blankie. How will I go sleepies?" and "What's wrong with peeing in the shower?" But, when a parent discovered that her 14-year-old daughter's profile had been updated with a message that directly referred to a hardcore porn film, the plan backfired and Coke had to pull the promotion.[144] What does it take to get the attention of jaded young people, who get exposed to all kinds of messages in cyberspace? What guidelines (if any) should marketers follow when they try to talk to young people on social media platforms?

8-27 The *sleeper effect* implies that perhaps we shouldn't worry too much about how positively people evaluate a source. Similarly, there's a saying in public relations that "any publicity is good publicity." Do you agree?

8-28 The American Medical Association encountered a firestorm of controversy when it agreed to sponsor a line of healthcare products that Sunbeam manufactured (a decision it later reversed). Should trade or professional organizations, journalists, professors, and others endorse specific products at the expense of other offerings?

8-29 Swiss Legend, a watch brand, gets famous people to wear its colorful timepieces. One way it does this is to give away its products at awards shows. Publicists call this common practice "gifting the talent": Companies provide stars with "goody bags" full of complimentary products.[145] What do you think about the practice of "gifting the talent" to accumulate endorsements? Is this a sound strategy? Is it ethical for celebrities to accept these gifts?

8-30 Watchdog groups have long decried product placements because they blur the line between content and advertising without adequately informing viewers. The networks themselves appear to be divided on how far they want to open the gate. According to one study, the effectiveness of product placement varies by product category and type of placement. Consumers indicate that product placements have the most influence on their grocery, electronics, and apparel purchases. The most common platform for a placement is to get a brand shown on a T-shirt or other piece of an actor's wardrobe.[146] What do you think about this practice? Under what conditions is product placement likely to influence you and your friends? When (if ever) is it counterproductive?

8-31 One of the most controversial intersections between marketing and society occurs when companies provide "educational materials" to schools.[147] Many firms, including Nike, Hershey, Crayola, Nintendo, and Foot Locker, provide free book covers swathed in ads. Standard art supplies, blocks, trucks, and dolls get supplemented with Milton Bradley and Care Bears worksheets, Purell hand-cleaning activities, and Pizza Hut reading programs. Clearasil provides sample packets of its acne medication along with brochures to educate high school students about proper skin care; the handouts also direct students to the Clearasil website where they can register for music downloads and iPods. Other companies contract with schools to run focus groups with their students during the school day to get reactions to new product ideas. Some schools encourage kids to practice their math as they count Tootsie Rolls, and the kids use reading software that bears the logos of Kmart, Coke, Pepsi, and Cap'n Crunch cereal. Many educators argue that these materials are a godsend for resource-poor schools that otherwise could not provide computers and other goodies to their students. However, a California law bans the use of textbooks with brand names and company logos. This legislation was prompted by complaints from parents about a middle-school math book that uses names such as Barbie, Oreos, Nike, and Sony PlayStation in word problems. What's your position on these practices? Should corporations be allowed to promote their products in schools in exchange for donations of educational materials, computers, and so on?

▶ APPLY

8-32 Think of a behavior someone does that is inconsistent with his or her attitudes (e.g., attitudes toward cholesterol, drug use, or even buying things to make him or her stand out or attain status). Ask the person to elaborate on why he or she does the behavior, and try to identify the way the person resolves dissonant elements.

8-33 Devise an attitude survey for a set of competing automobiles. Identify areas of competitive advantage or disadvantage for each model you include.

8-34 Construct a multiattribute model for a set of local restaurants. Based on your findings, suggest how restaurant managers could improve their establishment's image via the strategies described in this chapter.

8-35 Locate foreign ads at sites like japander.com in which celebrities endorse products that they don't pitch on their home turf. Ask friends or classmates to rate the attractiveness of each celebrity, then show them these ads and ask them to rate the celebrities again. Does the star's "brand image" change after it's paired with cheesy ads? Based on these results, what advice would you give to a manager who has to choose among endorsement offers for a famous client?

8-36 Collect ads that rely on sex appeal to sell products. How often do they communicate benefits of the actual product? How effective do you believe they are?

8-37 Observe the process of counterargumentation by asking a friend to talk out loud while he or she watches a commercial. Ask him or her to respond to each point in the ad or to write down reactions to the claims the message makes. How much skepticism regarding the claims can you detect?

8-38 The chapter discusses the important problem of medication adherence. How can healthcare marketers strengthen the link between intentions and behavior to boost the rate at which people actually take their prescribed medications? Devise a communications strategy to increase the adherence rate.

8-39 Make a log of all the commercials a network television channel shows during a 2-hour period. Assign each to a product category and decide whether each is a drama or an argument. Describe the types of messages the ads use (e.g., two-sided arguments), and keep track of the types of spokespeople who appear (e.g., TV actors, famous people, animated characters). What can you conclude about the dominant forms of persuasive tactics that marketers currently employ?

8-40 Collect examples of ads that rely on the use of metaphors or resonance. Do you feel these ads are effective? If you were marketing the products, would you feel more comfortable with ads that use a more straightforward, "hard-sell" approach? Why or why not?

8-41 Create a list of current celebrities whom you feel typify cultural categories (e.g., clown, mother figure, and so on). What specific brands do you feel each could effectively endorse?

CASE STUDY

Anti-Smoking Advertising—Can You Be Scared into Quitting?

Most advertising is focused on encouraging consumers to buy products or services. But advertising can also be used to discourage the use of products considered to be harmful. One of the best examples of this is the use of advertising focused on discouraging smoking. Over many years, different types of ads have been used—informational, funny, and some designed to be very shocking—all focused on convincing smokers to kick the habit, or better, to never start it.

Smoking is America's leading preventable cause of death and illness, responsible for more than 480,000 deaths each year—about 1,300 deaths per day. Each year in the United States, more people die from smoking than from murder, suicide, AIDS, drugs, alcohol, and car crashes—combined.[148] One would think that compelling statistics like these would scare anyone away from taking a single puff on a cigarette. However, the many factors involved in the decision to start and to continue to smoke create the need for persuasive messaging involving more than just facts.

A form of this messaging began with the Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act of 1965 that mandated warnings be placed on each pack of cigarettes stating in clear terms: "Caution: Cigarette Smoking May Be Hazardous to Your Health."[149] Early anti-smoking ad campaigns began appearing around this time and were largely executed as public service announcements, free TV airtime mandated by the Federal Communications Commission.[160] The ads focused on explaining the dangers of smoking and making it seem less socially acceptable to smoke. This advertising had some effectiveness, but had to compete for time on the air with other good causes such as preventing forest fires.

More recently, private anti-smoking groups began much more aggressive advertising. The Truth campaign focused on teens went nationwide in 2000. Recognizing that kids smoked because they wanted to rebel, they used that image to challenge young smokers with a question: "Are you really rebelling by giving all of your money to these big corporations run by old white guys?"[151]

The Centers for Disease Control decided on a different strategy, sponsoring ads that featured smokers who were experiencing the results of their habit. One shows a woman who has to speak with an artificial device because her voice box has been removed explaining that she misses singing lullabies to her grandson. Others feature people who have lost their teeth, a woman who had a premature baby, and a man with a hole in his throat—all results of smoking.[152,153]

Do these fear appeals work? The research says yes— at least for some. These types of appeals appear to be most effective with "prevention-focused" people who are concerned with possible negative outcomes.[154] However, one experiment found that scary images had the opposite effect on some adolescents, making them more at risk for future smoking. It may be that they responded in a defensive manner that caused them to downplay the health risks portrayed in the graphic photographs.[155]

In contrast to prevention-focused people, those who are "promotion-focused" are concerned with aspirations and achievements.[156] A PSA released by Ireland's government health service (and later used in New York) may be more effective for this personality type. In this ad, people lip-synced to Gloria Gaynor's anthem "I Will Survive," as they decide to quit cigarettes.[157] A campaign in Florida focused on the positives of quitting with the tagline, "Quit smoking and you quit all the crap that goes with it. You Quit. You Win."[158] Angela Rodriguez, VP of strategic planning and Insights at Alma, who produced the ads said, "We . . . learned that those same scare tactic approaches don't always connect, so we shifted our strategy to a more empathetic one . . . The result is [a] very emotive creative that is respectful of the smokers we are trying to reach."[159]

All of these approaches are having an effect, with the number of smokers in the United States at a new low of 16 percent, compared to 42 percent in the 1960s. Advertising cannot take all the credit; bans on smoking in public spaces, taxes on cigarettes, and extensive education and quit-smoking programs have all contributed.[160] But the CDC credits ad campaigns with making a difference, including creating a spike in calls to its 1-800-QUIT-NOW hotline.[161]

Whether selling cars or encouraging smokers to quit, advertisers have a number of persuasive approaches available for use. Considering the many factors involved in the decision to start or quit smoking, multiple ad approaches will be needed to persuade someone to make a change. Just as with the marketing of products and services, our target markets are not always as homogeneous as they might appear, so different appeals will work with different sub segments. Choosing the right ones just may help someone avoid an early death due to cancer or heart disease.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 8-1 What is another health, political, or philanthropic cause that could benefit from an advertising campaign? Create two taglines that could be used: one for people who are prevention-focused and another for those who are promotion-focused.

CS 8-2 Health warnings have appeared on cigarette packages for almost 50 years. Discuss how habituation (from Chapter 6) may be a factor affecting their effectiveness. In over 80 countries, graphic images related to smoking's effects must also be shown on the packages.[162] Why or why not might this help smokers decide to quit?

CS 8-3 How can a marketer determine what kinds of appeals will be the most persuasive in making the case for a product or cause? Design a simple experiment using the cause you chose for question CS 8.1 above

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If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

8-42 A government agency wants to encourage people who have been drinking to use designated drivers. What advice could you give the organization about constructing persuasive communications? Discuss some factors that might be important, including the structure of the communications, where they should appear, and who should deliver them. Should it use fear appeals? If so, how?

8-43 Contrast the hierarchies of effects the chapter outlines. How should marketers take these different situations into account when they choose their marketing mix?

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9 Decision Making

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why

9-1 The three categories of consumer decision making are cognitive, habitual, and affective.

9-2 A cognitive purchase decision is the outcome of a series of stages that results in the selection of one product over competing options.

9-3 We often rely on rules-of-thumb to make routine decisions.

9-4 The way information about a product choice is framed can prime a decision even when the consumer is unaware of this influence.



Source: Stefanocapra/Fotolia

Richard has had it! There's only so much longer he can go on watching TV on his tiny, antiquated set. It was bad enough trying to squint at *The Walking Dead.* The final straw was when he couldn't tell the Titans from the Jaguars during an NFL football game. When he went next door to watch the second half on Mark's home theater setup, he finally realized what he was missing. Budget or not, it was time to act: A man has to have his priorities.

Where to start looking? The web, naturally. Richard checks out a few comparison-shopping websites, including pricegrabber.com/ and bizrate.com. After he narrows down his options, he ventures out to check on a few sets in person. He figures he'll probably get a decent selection (and an affordable price) at one of those huge "big box" stores. Arriving at Zany Zack's Appliance Emporium, Richard heads straight for the Video Zone in the back; he barely notices the rows of toasters, microwave ovens, and stereos on his way. Within minutes, a smiling salesperson in a cheap suit accosts him. Even though he could use some help, Richard tells the salesperson he's only browsing. He figures these guys don't know what they're talking about, and they're simply out to make a sale no matter what.

Richard examines some of the features on the 60-inch flatscreens. He knew his friend Evey had a set by Prime Wave that she really liked, and his sister Alex warned him to stay away from the Kamashita. Although Richard finds a Prime Wave model loaded to the max with features such as a sleep timer, on-screen programming menu, cable-compatible tuner, and picture-in-picture, he chooses the less expensive Precision 2000X because it has one feature that really catches his fancy: stereo broadcast reception.

Later that day, Richard is a happy man as he sits in his easy chair and watches Sheldon match wits with Leonard, Howard, and the others on *The Big Bang Theory*. If he's going to be a couch potato, he's going in style.

OBJECTIVE 9-1
The three categories of consumer decision making are cognitive, habitual, and affective.

What's Your Problem?

Richard's decision represented his response to a problem. In fact *every* consumer decision we make is a response to a problem. Of course, the type and scope of these problems varies enormously; our needs range from simple physiological priorities such as quenching thirst to whether we will spend our hard-earned money on a television to abstract intellectual or aesthetic quandaries such as choosing a college major—or perhaps what to wear to that upcoming Bruno Mars concert.

Because some purchase decisions are more important than others, the amount of effort we put into each differs. Sometimes the decision-making process is almost automatic; we seem to make snap judgments based on little information. At other times it resembles a full-time job. A person may literally spend days or weeks agonizing over an important purchase such as a new home, a car, or even an iPhone versus a Samsung Galaxy.

We make some decisions thoughtfully and rationally as we carefully weigh the pros and cons of different choices. In other cases we let our emotions guide us to one choice over another as we react to a problem with enthusiasm, joy, or even disgust. Still other actions actually *contradict* what those rational models predict. For example, **purchase momentum** occurs when our initial impulse purchases actually increase the likelihood that we will buy even more (instead of less as we satisfy our needs); it's like we get "revved up" and plunge into a spending spree (we've all been there!).[1]

Hyperchoice: Too Much of a Good Thing!

Given the range of problems we all confront in our lives, clearly it is difficult to apply a one-size-fits-all explanation to the complexities of consumer behavior. Things get even more complicated when we realize just how many choices we have to make in today's information-rich environment. Ironically, for many of us one of our biggest problems is not having too few choices, but rather too many.

This condition of **consumer hyperchoice** forces us to make repeated decisions that may drain psychological energy while decreasing our abilities to make smart choices.[2] A study conducted in a grocery store illustrates how having too much can handicap our thought processes. Shoppers tried samples of flavored fruit jams in two different conditions: in the "limited choice" condition they picked from six flavors, whereas those in the "extensive choice" group saw 24 flavors. Thirty percent of consumers in the limited group actually bought a jar of jam as a result, and a paltry 3 percent of those in the extensive group did.

Part of what we're going to discuss in this chapter already is familiar ground to you. In Chapter 4 we reviewed approaches to learning that link options to outcomes, where over time we come to link certain choices to good or bad results. In Chapter 5 we talked about affective decision making; how our emotional responses drive many of our choices. And, in Chapter 8 we reviewed three hierarchies of effects, or the sequence of steps involving thinking, feeling, and eventually doing. These ideas really relate to types of decision making because they remind us that depending on the situation and the importance of what we're dealing with, our choices can be dominated by "hot" emotions, "cold" information processing, or even "lukewarm" snap decisions. Figure 9.1 summarizes the three "buckets" of consumer decision making.

Researchers now realize that decision makers actually possess a *repertoire* of strategies. The perspective of **constructive processing** argues that we evaluate the effort we'll need to make a particular choice and then tailor the amount of cognitive "effort" we expend to get the job done.[3] When the task requires a well-thought-out,



Figure 9.1 THE THREE "BUCKETS" OF CONSUMER DECISION MAKING

rational approach, we'll invest the brainpower to do it. Otherwise, we look for shortcuts such as "just do what I usually do," or perhaps we make "gut" decisions based on our emotional reactions. In some cases, we actually create a **mental budget** that helps us to estimate what we will consume over time so that we can regulate what we do in the present. If the dieter knows he will be chowing down at a big BBQ tomorrow, he may decide to skip that tempting candy bar today.[4]

Self-Regulation

Each of us fights a constant battle to control our desires, whether these involve splurging on expensive clothes or treating ourselves to fattening snacks. Many factors, both internal (for example, will-power) and external (for example, peer pressure), help to determine whether or when we give in. Even something as innocent as checking your Facebook page can make you lose control! Recent research implies that when you focus on what your close friends post, this makes you feel better. This momentary boost in self-esteem we get in turn prompts us to lose self-control and engage in impulsive behaviors such as binge eating and even reckless spending that lowers credit scores.[5]

The buckets of decision making we just described don't necessarily work independently of one another. Think for example about Orlando, a 28-year-old marketing manager who has decided to embark on a weight-loss program. The pressure is on to drop the pounds before he marries Amanda this summer. Orlando knows he needs a plan if he has any chance to succeed.

A person's efforts to change or maintain his or her actions over time, whether these involve dieting, living on a budget, or training to run a marathon, involve careful planning that is a form of **self-regulation**. If we have a self-regulatory strategy, this means that we specify in advance how we want to respond in certain situations. These "if-then" plans or **implementation intentions** may dictate how much weight we give to different kinds of information (emotional or cognitive), a timetable to carry out a decision, or even how we will deal with disruptive influences that might interfere with our plans (like a bossy salesperson who tries to steer us to a different choice).[6]

Orlando may engage in cognitive decision making as he carefully selects a diet and perhaps compiles a list of foods he will "ban" from his kitchen. In addition, he may have to recognize that he has a behavioral pattern of snacking on junk food in the mid-afternoon whether he's really hungry or not. Simple, but powerful, behavioral cues in the environment like that Snickers bar sitting on his coworker Arya's desk can lead us to quick and sometimes rash actions (how will Orlando explain the "disappearance" of that candy bar to Arya?) He may also have to recognize that some emotional "triggers" set him off so when his boss yells at him his first response is to reach for the sweets to cheer himself up.

Orlando may have to "argue" with himself as he weighs the long-term benefits of a successful diet against short-term temptations. In some cases, this involves some

creative tinkering with the facts—for example, consumers engage in **counteractive construal** when they exaggerate the negative aspects of behaviors that will interfere with the ultimate goal.[7] Orlando may inflate the number of calories in the snack to help him to resist its lure. He may even go public with his weight loss plan by posting his weekly weigh-in on a phone app like DietBet so that others can watch his progress—and even bet on his success or failure.[8]

A recent study shed some light on why our efforts to self-regulation get stronger or weaker over time as we progress toward a goal – and especially why what starts out as an exciting quest turns into a painful slog even though we're getting closer to the objective. The researchers distinguished between two types of motivation: (1) **Promotion motivation** encourages people to focus on hopes and aspirations, while (2) **Prevention motivation** instead focuses on responsibilities and duties as it prompts people to think about avoiding something negative. We referred to these strategies as "approach" and avoidance" when we talked about learning in Chapter 4. As they predicted, individuals tend to be more promotion-motivated in earlier stages of goal pursuit and become more prevention-motivated as goal attainment draws near. The researchers speculate that when we are in the early stages of attaining a goal, we compare our progress with where we started, so we are optimistic. But after we reach the midpoint, we switch our reference to the end goal we're striving for—and thus focus on our shortcomings instead. Their advice: In the early stages, focus on how attaining the goal will help you to achieve things you hope for (such as a healthy body). Then when you're in the home stretch, focus on how getting to your goal will help you to fulfill your responsibilities. And, make a list of things "not to do" to stay on course. Finally, reward yourself with a break from something you don't enjoy when you're making progress so long as it doesn't short-circuit your efforts (e.g., no congratulatory margaritas if you're trying to get sober).[9]

In recent years, researchers and marketers have become more aware of the role they can play in changing consumer behavior by helping people to regulate their own actions. This help may take the form of simple feedback like a phone app for dieters or perhaps a wearable computing device like the Fitbit that tells you how many steps you take in a day (and how many more you should take). These applications provide a **feedback loop** to help with self-regulation. The basic premise is amazingly simple: Provide people with information about their actions in real time, and then give them a chance to change those actions so that you push them to improve. A common feedback loop we increasingly see on highways comes from those "dynamic speed displays" that use a radar sensor to flash "Your Speed" when you pass one. This isn't new information; all you have to do is look at your speedometer to know the same thing. Yet on average these displays result in a 10 percent reduction in driving speed among motorists for several miles following exposure to the feedback loop.[10]

OBJECTIVE 9-2
A cognitive purchase decision is the outcome of a series of stages that results in the selection of one product over competing options.

Cognitive Decision Making

Traditionally, consumer researchers approached decision making from a **rational perspective**. According to this view, people calmly and carefully integrate as much information as possible with what they already know about a product, painstakingly weigh the pluses and minuses of each alternative, and arrive at a satisfactory decision. This kind of careful, deliberate thinking is especially relevant to activities such as financial planning that call for a lot of attention to detail and many choices that impact a consumer's quality of life.[16] When marketing managers believe

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Does seeing "beach bodies" on Instagram lead people to make foolish purchases? In a study, overweight people who saw a thin person were more likely to purchase a more expensive product and take on credit card debt than were normal weight participants. The researchers explain that exposure to images like this reminded these people that they are not good at inhibiting their impulses—so this realization loosened the purse strings. To add insult to injury, the thin images didn't have to be of people—even seeing pictures of thin Coke bottles made the subjects reach for pricier products![11]

Now, the bad news: As any frustrated dieter knows, self-regulation doesn't necessarily work. Just because we devise a well-meaning strategy doesn't mean we'll follow it. Sometimes our best-laid intentions go awry literally because we're too tired to fight temptation. Research shows that our ability to self-regulate declines as the day goes on. The **Morning Morality Effect** shows that people are more likely to cheat, lie, or even commit fraud in the afternoon than in the morning. Scientists know that the part of the brain they call the **executive control center** that we use for important decision making, including moral judgments, can be worn down or distracted even by simple tasks like memorizing numbers.[12] As one researcher nicely put it, "To the extent that you're cognitively tired, you're more likely to give in to the devil on your shoulder."[13]

Other studies show that, ironically the act of planning itself can undermine our ability to attain goals. When a person is not happy with his or her progress toward a goal like weight loss, the act of thinking about what he or she needs to do to improve performance can cause emotional distress. This angst in turn results in less self-control.[14] And, when people are able to easily recall prior instances when they were able to exert self-control, they are more successful at the present task. On the other hand, when

(continued)



Dynamic speed displays provide a feedback loop to help drivers regulate their speed.
Source: cre250/Fotolia

that their customers in fact do undergo this kind of planning, they should carefully study steps in decision making to understand just how consumers weigh information, form beliefs about options, and choose criteria they use to select one option over others. With these insights in hand, they can develop products and promotional strategies that supply the specific information people look for in the most effective formats.[17]

Steps in the Cognitive Decision-Making Process

Let's think about Richard's process of buying a new TV that we described at the beginning of the chapter. He didn't suddenly wake up and crave a new flatscreen. Richard went through several steps between the time he felt the need to replace his TV and

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they recall times that resulted in failure, they're more likely to indulge again.[15] As we saw in the last chapter's discussion of attitudes and behavior, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions!"

when he actually brought one home. We describe these steps as (1) problem recognition, (2) information search, (3) evaluation of alternatives, and (4) product choice. Of course, as we saw in Chapter 4, after we make a decision, its outcome affects the final step in the process, in which learning occurs based on how well the choice worked out. This learning process in turn influences the likelihood that we'll make the same choice the next time the need for a similar decision occurs. And so on and so on. Figure 9.2 provides an overview of this decision-making process. Let's briefly look at each step.

Step 1: Problem Recognition

Ford's plan to promote its Fusion hybrid model focused on people who aren't thinking about buying a new car—at least not right now. Its TV commercials target what the auto industry terms the "upper funnel," or potential buyers down the road. Ford's research found that a large number of U.S. drivers are still unaware of the Fusion. The company is confident that it can close sales if and when customers decide to buy a new car. But, its weak spot is to get people into the frame of mind where they want to do that. To create desire where none yet exists, visitors to a special website entered to win a trip and a new Fusion. Ford publicized the sweepstakes on Twitter and Facebook; during the first two weeks of the promotion, almost 70,000 people requested more information about the car.[18]

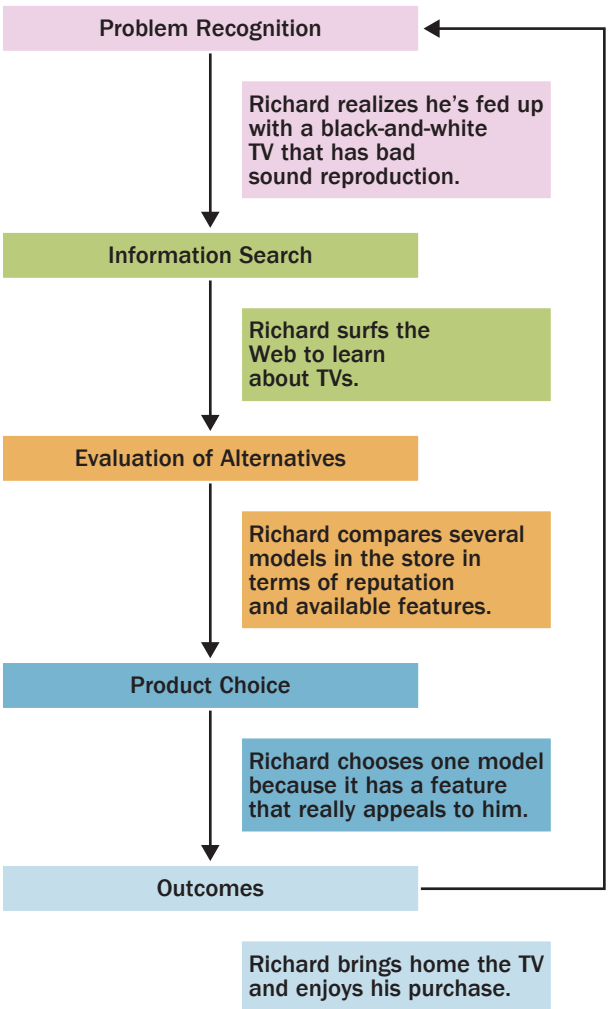


Figure 9.2 STAGES IN CONSUMER DECISION MAKING

Problem recognition occurs at what Ford terms the upper funnel, when we experience a significant difference between our current state of affairs and some state we desire. As we noted at the beginning of the chapter, this *problem* requires a *solution*. A person who unexpectedly runs out of gas on the highway has a problem, as does the person who becomes dissatisfied with the image of his car, even though there is nothing mechanically wrong with it. Although the quality of Richard's TV had not changed, he altered his *standard of comparison,* and as a result he had a new problem to solve: how to improve his viewing experience.

Figure 9.3 shows that a problem arises in one of two ways. The person who runs out of gas experiences a decline in the quality of his *actual state* (*need recognition*). In contrast, the person who craves a newer, flashier car moves his *ideal state* (*opportunity recognition*) upward. Either way, there is a gulf between the actual state and the ideal state.[19] Richard perceived a problem because of opportunity recognition: He moved his ideal state upward in terms of the quality of TV reception he craved.

Step 2: Information Search

Once a consumer recognizes a problem, he or she needs the 411 to solve it. **Information search** is the process by which we survey the environment for appropriate data to make a reasonable decision. You might recognize a need and then search the marketplace for specific information (a process we call *prepurchase search*). However, many of us, especially veteran shoppers, enjoy browsing just for the fun of it or because we like to stay up to date on what's happening in the marketplace. Those shopaholics engage in *ongoing search*.[20] As a general rule, we search more when the purchase is important, when we have more of a need to learn more about the purchase, or when it's easy to obtain the relevant information.[21]

Does knowing something about the product make it more or less likely that we will engage in research? The answer to this question isn't as obvious as it first appears: Product experts and novices use different strategies when they make decisions. "Newbies" who know little about a product should be the most motivated to find out more about it. However, experts are more familiar with the product category, and thus they should be better able to understand the meaning of any new product information they might acquire.

So, who searches more? The answer is neither: Search tends to be greatest among those consumers who are *moderately knowledgeable* about the product. Typically we

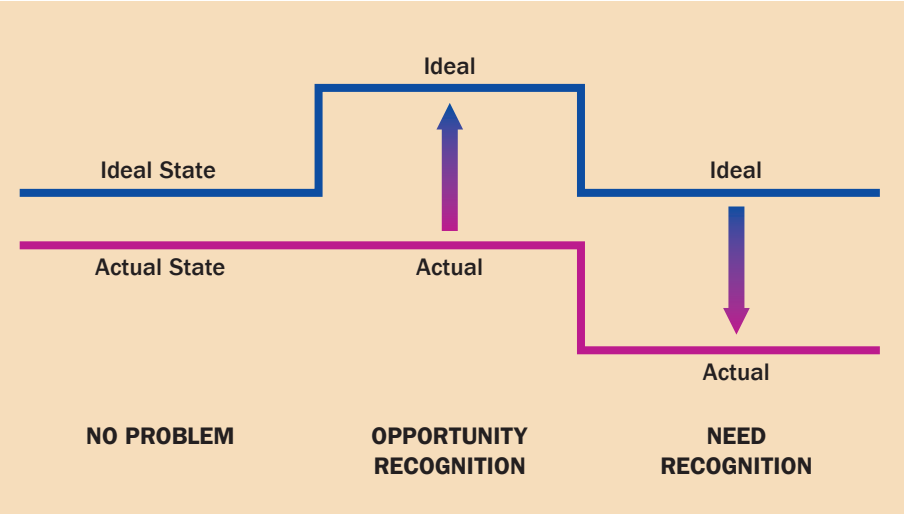


Figure 9.3 PROBLEM RECOGNITION: SHIFTS IN ACTUAL OR IDEAL STATES

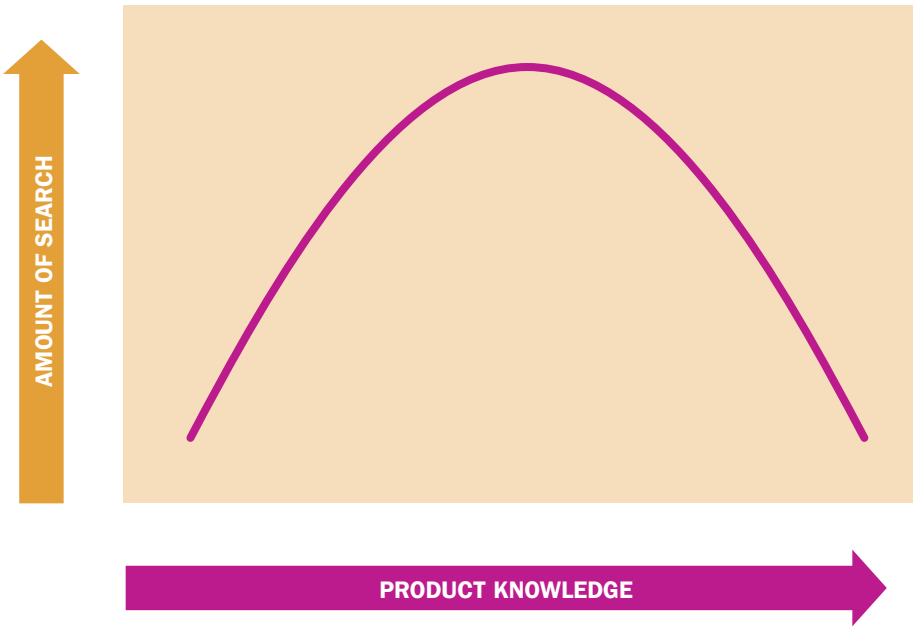


Figure 9.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF INFORMATION SEARCH AND PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

find an inverted-U relationship between knowledge and search effort, as Figure 9.4 shows. People with limited expertise may not feel they are competent to search extensively. In fact, they may not even know where to start. Richard, who did not spend a lot of time researching his purchase, is typical. He visited one store, and he looked only at brands with which he was already familiar. In addition, he focused on only a small number of product features.[22]

Because experts have a better sense of what information is relevant to the decision, they engage in *selective search*, which means their efforts are more focused and efficient. In contrast, novices are more likely to rely on the opinions of others and on "nonfunctional" attributes, such as brand name and price, to distinguish among alternatives. Finally, novice consumers may process information in a "top-down" rather than a "bottom-up" manner; they focus less on details than on the big picture. For instance, they may be more impressed by the sheer amount of technical information an ad presents than by the actual significance of the claims it makes.[23]

Any trial lawyer will tell you never to ask a question of a witness unless you already know what he or she will answer. Consumers too like to consult reliable sources that tend to tell them what we want to hear. We can see that the search process isn't perfect, so there's always some bias in terms of what we get when we cast our nets. This is true whether we're asking people we know for advice, or trolling online.

The internet puts an almost limitless supply of information at our fingertips—at least in theory. The reality often is quite different. Rather than taking advantage of many sources that may provide us with a range of opinions or options when we want to make a decision, sophisticated algorithms insure that we only access content that reinforces what we already think we know. A **filter bubble** occurs when the broadcast media, websites, and social media platforms we consult serve up answers based upon what they "think" we want to see. For example, we get personalized Google search results and a Facebook news stream that's based upon sites we've clicked on in the past, our browsing history, and our physical location. This means we're far less likely to be exposed to conflicting viewpoints, so we each live in a "bubble" of our own making. Conservatives who watch Fox News religiously will see stories that confirm

their beliefs, while their liberal counterparts get the same assurance from MSNBC.[24] Thus what starts as a search for the best information upon which to base our decisions may end in a *self-fulfilling prophecy* where we only read and see content that confirms what we thought all along.

Step 3: Evaluate Alternatives

Much of the effort we put into a purchase decision occurs at the stage where we have to put the pedal to the metal and actually choose a product from several alternatives. This may not be easy; modern consumer society abounds with choices. In some cases, there may be literally hundreds of brands (as in cigarettes) or different variations of the same brand (as in shades of lipstick).

Ask a friend to name all the brands of perfume she can think of. The odds are she will reel off three to five names rather quickly, then stop and think awhile before she comes up with a few more. She's probably familiar with the first set of brands, and in fact she probably wears one or more of these. Her list may also contain one or two brands that she doesn't like; to the contrary, they come to mind because she thinks they smell nasty or are unsophisticated. Note also that there are many, many more brands on the market that she did not name at all.

If your friend goes to the store to buy perfume, it is likely that she will consider buying some or most of the brands she listed initially. She might also entertain a few more possibilities if these come to her attention while she's at the fragrance counter (for example, if an employee "ambushes" her with a scent sample as she walks down the aisle).

We call the alternatives a consumer knows about the **evoked set** and the ones he or she seriously considers the **consideration set**.[25] Recall that Richard did not know much about the technical aspects of television sets, and he had only a few major brands in mind. Of these, two were acceptable possibilities and one was not.

For obvious reasons, a marketer who finds that his brand is not in his target market's evoked set has cause to worry. You often don't get a second chance to make a good first impression; a consumer isn't likely to place a product in his evoked set after he has already considered it and rejected it. Indeed, we're more likely to add a new brand to the evoked set than one that we previously considered but passed over, even after a marketer has provided additional positive information about it.[26] For marketers, a consumer's reluctance to give a rejected product a second chance underscores the importance of ensuring that it performs well from the time the company introduces it.

Net Profit

As the old saying goes, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." When we check out online reviews of a product and they're all glowing, we tend to be a bit suspicious. It's actually more effective for a review to include some negative reviews—if shoppers think they're irrelevant. Why? We usually assign a lot of weight to negative information because we expect it to be more diagnostic than sugar-coated comments. So, when we encounter bad stuff but we don't feel it's very helpful, we still feel that we have more complete information about the product, and thus we're comfortable that we can make a wise choice.[27]

Step 4: Product Choice

Once we assemble and evaluate the relevant options in a category, eventually we have to choose one.[28] Recall that the decision rules that guide our choices range from simple and quick strategies to complicated processes that require a lot of attention and cognitive processing.[29] Our job isn't getting any easier as companies overwhelm us with more and more features. We deal with 50-button remote controls, digital cameras with hundreds of mysterious features and book-length manuals, and cars with dashboard systems worthy of the space shuttle. Experts call this spiral of complexity **feature creep**. As evidence that the proliferation of gizmos is counterproductive, Philips Electronics found that at least half of the products buyers return have nothing wrong with them; consumers simply couldn't understand how to use them! What's worse, on average the buyer spent only 20 minutes trying to figure out how to use the product and then gave up.

Why don't companies avoid this problem? One reason is that we often assume the more features the better. It's only when we get the product home that we realize the virtue of simplicity. In one study, consumers chose among three models of a digital



As feature creep becomes more of a problem, just providing clear instructions to users is a major "pain point" for many manufacturers. *Source:* supercavie/Shutterstock.

device that varied in terms of how complex each was. More than 60 percent chose the one with the most features. Then, when the participants got the chance to choose from up to 25 features to customize their product, the average person chose 20 of these add-ons. But when they actually used the devices, it turned out that the large number of options only frustrated them; they ended up being much happier with the simpler product. As the saying goes, "Be careful what you wish for."[30]

Step 5: Postpurchase Evaluation

Another old saying goes, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating." In other words, the true test of our decision-making process is whether we are happy with the choice we made after we undergo all these stages. **Postpurchase evaluation** closes the loop; it occurs when we experience the product or service we selected and decide whether it meets (or maybe even exceeds) our expectations. We'll take a closer look at that in the next chapter.

When all is said and done with the transaction, is the customer always right? Not anymore. Today, postpurchase evaluation is just starting to work both ways. In the process called **social scoring**, both customers and service providers increasingly rate one another's performance. Have you ever written a negative review of your Uber driver or a server at a restaurant? A heads up: While we're busily documenting our interactions with salespeople and other service providers, they're returning the favor. People who work in small businesses have always been aware of problem customers who drop in periodically to torment them. But now, at least in theory, a salesperson or other service provider at any kind of organization large or small can grade your behavior. And the icing on the cake is that they can share these scores with others. It's no longer only Santa who knows if you've been naughty or nice.

At platforms like Airbnb and Uber, users get a rating each time they patronize the service. It's no surprise that according to Lyft and Uber drivers, failure to leave a tip is a surefire road to a dismal evaluation. For your future reference, these are some other behaviors that will make or break a five-star rating straight from the mouths of operators:[31]

Marketing Pitfall

Product labels assist us with problem solving, but some are more useful than others. Here are some examples of the not-so-helpful variety:

- Instructions for folding up a portable baby carriage: "Step 1: Remove baby."
- On a Conair Pro Style 1600 hair dryer: "WARNING: Do not use in shower. Never use while sleeping."
- At a rest stop on a Wisconsin highway: "Do not eat urinal cakes."
- On a bag of Fritos: "You could be a winner! No purchase necessary. Details inside."
- On some Swanson frozen dinners: "Serving suggestion: Defrost."
- On Tesco's Tiramisu dessert (printed on bottom of box): "Do not turn upside down."
- On Marks & Spencer bread pudding: "Product will be hot after heating."
- On packaging for a Rowenta iron: "Do not iron clothes on body."
- On Nytol sleeping aid: "Warning: May cause drowsiness."

- "Don't puke in or ruin the car."
- "The most common reason for a lower passenger rating is making us wait after we arrive to pick you up. If you're ready to go at the curb when we arrive, it means a lot."
- "Rude passengers immediately get four stars. Depending on the level of rudeness, their rating can go down to one star."
- "Passengers get a one-star ding for everything they mess up, like not being ready, slamming doors, or being impolite."
- "I will deduct points for rude behavior or illegal activities. I will also deduct points for passengers who leave garbage in my car."

This is not just FYI stuff; a bad rating can prevent you from booking rooms or rides down the road. Uber and Lyft share rider ratings with other drivers, who may choose not to pick up a passenger with an unsavory record. Open Table bans people from using its service if they have missed too many reservations. At Airbnb, you sometimes have to make the case for your worthiness to stay at a guesthouse. The application process feels a bit like getting a surprise inspection visit from a social worker when you're trying to adopt a child.

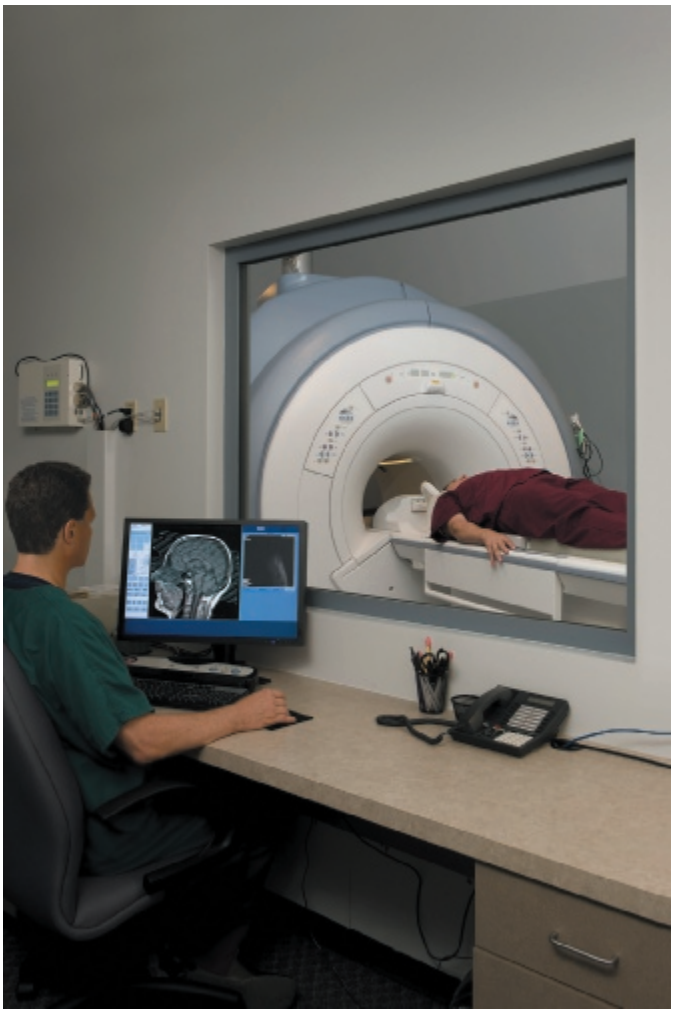
This new transparency may disrupt not only the service economy—it also can obliterate the traditional power disparity between buyer and seller. Suddenly, the user has to play nice and think about how today's nasty behavior will influence tomorrow's reputation. So far it doesn't seem that service businesses have thought much about the potential impact of this reverse rating process, but it could be just a matter of time before overly demanding patients need to locate doctors who will agree to put up with them, customers who like to yell at repairmen have no one to fix their leaking toilets, and perhaps even students who email their professor at 2:00 a.m. with urgent questions about assignments that were due two weeks ago get banned from registering for classes (okay, that last one is a fantasy of mine that I just threw in there).[32]

Neuromarketing

Is there a "buy button" in your brain? Some corporations, including Google, CBS, Disney, and Frito-Lay, have teamed up with neuroscientists to find out.[33] **Neuromarketing** uses functional magnetic resonance imaging (or fMRI), a brain-scanning device that tracks blood flow as we perform mental tasks to take an up-close look at how our brains respond to marketing messages and product design features. In recent years, researchers have discovered that regions in the brain, such as the amygdala, the hippocampus, and the hypothalamus, are dynamic switchboards that blend memory, emotions, and biochemical triggers. These interconnected neurons shape the ways in which fear, panic, exhilaration, and social pressure influence our choices.

Scientists know that specific regions of the brain light up in these scans to show increased blood flow when a person recognizes a face, hears a song, makes a decision, or senses deception. Now they hope to harness this technology to measure consumers' reactions to movie trailers, automobiles, the appeal of a pretty face, and even their loyalty to specific brands. DaimlerChrysler took brain scans of men as they looked at photos of cars and confirmed that sports cars activated their reward centers. The company's scientists found that the most popular vehicles—the Porsche- and Ferrari-style sports cars—triggered activity in a section of the brain they call the *fusiform face area*, which governs facial recognition. A psychiatrist who ran the study commented, "They were reminded of faces when they looked at the cars. The lights of the cars look a little like eyes."

A study that took brain scans of people as they drank competing soft-drink brands illustrates how loyalty to a brand affects our reactions, even at a basic, physiological



Neuromarketing techniques rely on sophisticated devices like the fMRI to understand how our brains respond to marketing messages.
Source: James Steidl/123RF.

level. When researchers monitored brain scans of 67 people who took a blind taste test of Coca-Cola and Pepsi, each soft drink lit up the brain's reward system. The participants were evenly split as to which drink they preferred—even though three out of four participants *said* they preferred Coke. When told they were drinking Coke, the regions of the brain that control memory lit up, and this activation drowned out the area that simply reacts to taste cues. In this case, Coke's strong brand identity trumped the sensations coming from respondents' taste receptors.

In another application, Frito-Lay gave electroencephalograms (EEGs), which measure fluctuations in the electrical activity directly below the scalp, to test subjects to learn how they respond to Cheetos cheese puffs. Researchers reported that people had a powerful reaction to the orange residue of cheese dust the snack leaves on their hands; one account described this as "a sense of giddy subversion that consumers enjoy over the messiness of the product." Frito-Lay went on to develop an advertising campaign it called "The Orange Underground"; the edgy Cheetos mascot Chester Cheetah encouraged people to commit subversive acts with the product. In one spot, a guy sitting on a plane sticks Cheetos up the nostrils of his snoring seatmate. Do not try this at home!

Online Decision Making

With the tremendous number of websites and apps available and the huge number of people who spend big chunks of their day online, how can people organize information and decide where to click? A **cybermediary** often is the answer. This term describes

a website or app that helps to filter and organize online market information so that customers can identify and evaluate alternatives more efficiently. Many consumers regularly link to comparison-shopping sites, such as Bizrate.com or Pricegrabber.com, for example, that list online retailers that sell a given item along with the price each charges.[34] *Directories* and *portals,* such as Yahoo! or The Knot, are general services that tie together a large variety of different sites. *Forums*, *fan clubs*, and *user groups* offer product-related discussions to help customers sift through options. **Intelligent agents** are sophisticated software programs that use *collaborative filtering* technologies to learn from past user behavior to recommend new purchases.[35] When you let Amazon.com suggest a new book, the site uses an intelligent agent to propose novels based on what you and others like you have bought in the past.

What's the most common way for us to conduct information search today? Google it, of course! Although there are other **search engines** out there such as Microsoft's Bing, Yahoo! or even YouTube (which is the world's second largest engine after Google), Google's version of the software that examines the web for matches to terms like "home theater system" or "tattoo removal services" is so dominant—with 96 percent of the world's mobile search market—the name has become a verb. However, even a giant like Google can't rest on its laurels because changes in how we search will probably reduce our reliance on search engines. Increasingly consumers bypass Google as they go directly on their smartphones or tablets to apps like Yelp to read and write product reviews.[36]

However, as anyone who's ever googled knows, the web delivers enormous amounts of product and retailer information in seconds. The biggest problem web surfers face these days is to narrow down their choices, not to beef them up. In cyberspace, simplification is key. Still, the sad reality is that in many cases we simply don't search as much as we might. If we google a term, most of us are only likely to look at the first few results at the top of the list.

Indeed, that's one reason why **search engine optimization (SEO)** is so important today; this term refers to the procedures companies use to design the content of websites and posts to maximize the likelihood that their content will show up when someone searches for a relevant term. Our goal is to persuade people to access our content. Just like an expert fisherman chooses his spot and carefully selects the right lure to catch a fish, SEO experts create online content that will attract the attention of the *search algorithms*, or mathematical formulas, that companies like Google use to determine which entries will turn up in a search. The algorithm will hunt for certain keywords, and it also will consider who uses them. For example, if a lot of influential people share an entry, the formula will weight it more.

Can you imagine choosing a restaurant before you check it out online? Increasingly many of us rely on online reviews to steer us toward and away from specific restaurants, hotels, movies, garments, music, and just about everything else. A survey of 28,000 respondents in 56 countries reported that online user ratings are the second-most trusted source of brand information (after recommendations from family and friends). We usually put a lot of stock in what members of our social networks recommend. Unfortunately, user ratings don't link strongly to actual product quality that objective evaluation services like *Consumer Reports* provide. And, there's evidence that mobile reviews may be less helpful than desktop reviews, even when the same reviewer writes both. Comments posted via mobile devices are more emotional and more negative.[37]

Regardless of their accuracy, customer product reviews are a key driver of satisfaction and loyalty. Another advantage these reviews provide is that consumers learn about other, less popular options they may like as well, and at the same time products such as movies, books, and CDs that aren't "blockbusters" are more likely to sell. At the online DVD rental company Netflix, for example, fellow subscribers recommend about two-thirds of

the films that people order. In fact, between 70 and 80 percent of Netflix rentals come from the company's back catalog of 38,000 films rather than recent releases.[38]

This aspect of online customer review is one important factor that's fueling an important business model called the **long tail**.[39] The basic idea is that we no longer need to rely solely on big hits (such as blockbuster movies or best-selling books) to find profits. Companies can also make money if they sell small amounts of items that only a few people want—*if* they sell enough different items. For example, Amazon.com maintains an inventory of 3.7 million books, compared to the 100,000 or so you'll find in a large retail store like Barnes & Noble. Most of these stores will sell only a few thousand copies (if that), but the 3.6 million books that Barnes & Noble *doesn't* carry make up a quarter of Amazon's revenues! Other examples of the long tail include successful microbreweries and TV networks that make money on reruns of old shows on channels like the *Game Show Network*.

How Do We Put Products into Categories?

Consumers are in the middle of a love affair with yogurt, and recently popular varieties like Greek yogurt do well among people who crave healthy, filling snacks. Now we see other offerings that allow people to drink their yogurt in the form of smoothies, kefir, and other blends that blur the lines among beverages, desserts, snacks, and even supplements like probiotics.[40] How can consumers make sense of these new products?

Remember that when consumers process product information, they don't do it in a vacuum. They evaluate its attributes in terms of what they already know about the item or other similar products. A person who thinks about a particular 35-mm camera will most likely compare it to *other* 35-mm cameras rather than to a disposable camera. Because the *category* in which a consumer places a product determines the other products he or she will compare it to, the way we classify a brand in our minds plays a big role in how we evaluate it.[41]A recent study that examined how consumers use calorie information demonstrates why the categories we use to define products are important. When people saw menus that listed the calorie count of individual items, they chose more dietetic items. However, when the lower calorie items were grouped into a single "low-calorie" category on the menu, diners actually selected them less frequently. The researchers explain that consumers have negative associations with low-calorie labels, so they're more likely to dismiss these options in the early stages of the decision process. As a result individual items are less likely to make the cut into diners' consideration sets, so ironically this menu information results in fewer healthier choices overall.[42]

Consumers cognitively represent product information in a **knowledge structure**. This term refers to a set of beliefs and the way we organize these beliefs in our minds. These structures matter to marketers like Stonyfield, Green Valley, and Trader Joe's that sell yogurt-related items because they want to ensure that customers correctly group their products. Typically, we represent a product in a knowledge structure at one of three levels. To understand this idea, consider how someone might respond to these questions about an ice cream cone: What other products share similar characteristics, and which would you consider as alternatives to eating a cone? These questions may be more complex than they first appear. At one level, a cone is similar to an apple because you could eat both as a dessert. At another level, a cone is similar to a piece of pie because you could eat either for dessert and both are fattening. At still another level, a cone is similar to an ice cream sundae—you could eat either for dessert, both are made of ice cream, and both are fattening. Figure 9.5 depicts these three levels.

It's easy to see that the foods a person associates with the category "fattening dessert" influence his or her decision about what to eat after dinner. The middle level, or *basic level category*, is typically the most useful for classifying products. At this level,

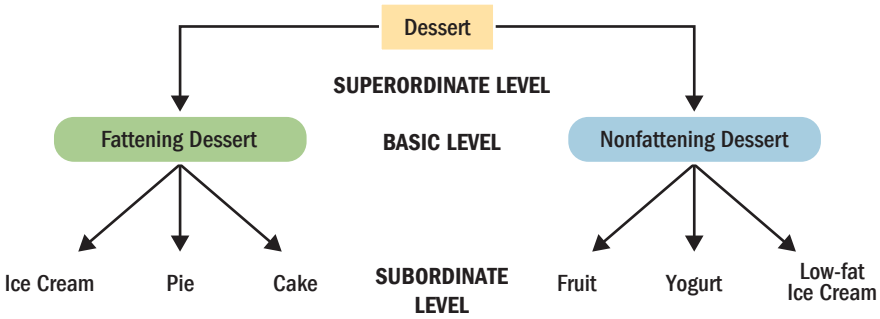


Figure 9.5 LEVELS OF CATEGORIZATION

the items we group together tend to have a lot in common with each other, but still permit us to consider a broad enough range of alternatives. The broader *superordinate category* is more abstract, whereas the more specific *subordinate category* often includes individual brands.[43] Of course, not all items fit equally well into a category. Apple pie is a better example of the subordinate category "pie" than is rhubarb pie, even though both are types of pies. This is because it's more *prototypical*, and most people would think of apple as a pie flavor before they thought of rhubarb. In contrast, true pie experts probably know a lot about both typical and atypical category examples.[44]

Product categories are the building blocks of a market, but sometimes companies like to play with them; they create new ones when they introduce **hybrid products** that feature characteristics from two distinct domains. Thus, we have the crossover utility vehicle (CUV) that mixes a passenger car and a sport utility vehicle (SUV) and the huge "athleisure" fashion phenomenon that fuses styles from athletic apparel and leisure apparel to yield an army of Lululemon-clad yoga buffs. And, let's not even talk about the "cronut" craze (a combination croissant and donut) that started with a New York bakery and made its leap to national stardom courtesy of Dunkin' Donuts.[45]

Strategic Implications of Product Categorization

The way we categorize products has a lot of strategic implications for marketers. That's because this process affects which products consumers will compare to our product and also the criteria they'll use to decide if they like us or the other guys.

Position a Product. The success of a *positioning strategy* hinges on the marketer's ability to convince the consumer to consider its product within a given category. For example, the orange juice industry tried to reposition orange juice as a drink people can enjoy all day long ("It's not just for breakfast anymore"). However, soft-drink companies attempt the opposite when they portray sodas as suitable for breakfast consumption. They are trying to make their way into consumers' "breakfast drink" category, along with orange juice, grapefruit juice, and coffee. Of course, this strategy can backfire, as Pepsi-Cola discovered when it introduced Pepsi a.m. and positioned it as a coffee substitute. The company did such a good job of categorizing the drink as a morning beverage that customers wouldn't drink it at any other time, and the product failed.[46]

Identify Competitors. At the abstract, superordinate level, many different product forms compete for membership. The category "entertainment" might comprise both bowling and the ballet, but not many people would substitute one of these activities for the other. Products and services that on the surface are quite different, however, actually compete with each other at a broad level for consumers' discretionary dollars. Although bowling or ballet may not be a likely tradeoff for many people, a symphony might try to lure away ballet season ticket holders by positioning itself as an equivalent



This ad for Sunkist lemon juice attempts to establish a new category for the product by repositioning it as a salt substitute.
Source: Courtesy of Sunkist Growers.

member of the superordinate category "cultural event." We're often faced with choices between noncomparable categories, where we can't directly relate the attributes in one to those in another (the old problem of comparing apples and oranges). When we can create an overlapping category that encompasses both items (e.g., entertainment, value, usefulness) and then rate each alternative in terms of that superordinate category comparison, the process is easier.[47]

Create an Exemplar Product. As we saw with the case of apple pie versus rhubarb pie, if a product is a really good example of a category, then it is more familiar to consumers and they more easily recognize and recall it.[48] The characteristics of **category exemplars** tend to exert a disproportionate influence on how people think of the category in general.[49] In a sense, brands we strongly associate with a category get to "call the shots": They define the criteria we use to evaluate all category members.

Locate Products in a Store. Product categorization also can affect consumers' expectations regarding the places where they can locate a desired product. If products do not clearly fit into categories (e.g., is a rug furniture?), this may diminish our ability to find them or figure out what they're supposed to be once we do. For instance, a frozen dog food that pet owners had to thaw and cook before they served it to Fido failed in the market, partly because people could not adapt to the idea of buying dog food in the "frozen foods for people" section of their grocery stores.

Evaluative Criteria

When Richard looked at different television sets, he focused on one or two product features and completely ignored several others. He narrowed down his choices as he only considered two specific brand names, and from the Prime Wave and Precision models, he chose one that featured stereo capability. Table 9.1 summarizes the attributes of the TV sets that Richard considered. Now, let's see how a comparison of these attributes can alter Richard's choice of a specific brand depending on the rules he uses to consider them.

TABLE 9.1 Hypothetical Alternatives for a TV Set

		Brand Ratings		
Attribute	Importance Ranking	Prime Wave	Precision	Kamashita
Size of screen	1	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Stereo broadcast capability	2	Poor	Excellent	Good
Brand reputation	3	Excellent	Excellent	Poor
Onscreen programming	4	Excellent	Poor	Poor
Cable-ready capability	5	Good	Good	Good
Sleep timer	6	Excellent	Poor	Good

Evaluative criteria are the dimensions we use to judge the merits of competing options. When he compared alternative products, Richard could have chosen from among many criteria that ranged from functional attributes ("Does this TV come with remote control?") to experiential ones ("Does this TV's sound reproduction make me imagine I'm in a concert hall?").

Another important point is that criteria on which products *differ* from one another carry more weight in the decision process than do those where the alternatives are *similar*. If all brands a person considers rate equally well on one attribute (e.g., if all TVs come with remote control), Richard needs to find other reasons to choose one over another. **Determinant attributes** are the features we actually use to differentiate among our choices.

Marketers often educate consumers about which criteria they should use as determinant attributes. For example, consumer research from Church & Dwight indicated that many consumers view the use of natural ingredients as a determinant attribute. As a result, the company promoted its toothpaste made from baking soda, which the company already manufactured for Church & Dwight's Arm & Hammer brand.[50]



Product authenticity has become a determinant attribute for many consumers.
Source: CarmenKarin/Shutterstock.

The Power of Authenticity

Keep it real! Today one of the most important determinant attributes for many consumers – especially younger ones—is authenticity. In one survey of American shoppers, 94 percent of respondents said they would be more loyal to brands that practice transparency in terms of where they source their raw materials, while 56 percent claim that brand transparency would make them "loyal for life."[51]

Consumers today often want to know just where the things they buy came from. The J. Peterman Company clothing catalogs tell stories about the apparel they sell, and upscale grocery stores such as Whole Foods provide great detail about the specific farms where produce and meat were raised. So, product authenticity increasingly has become a determinant attribute. Researchers claim that although authenticity can be a hard concept to pin down, it seems to be composed of three attributes: heritage, sincerity, and commitment to quality.[52] That explains why many companies like to tout their "authentic" story; for example New Balance describes its Maine factory like this: "Built in 1945, the Depot Street building is the workplace of almost 400 associates. Each pair of shoes they produce is a proud work of craftsmanship that carries a little bit of the long history that is the town and its people."[53]

One of the biggest authenticity success stories is Chobani Greek yogurt. This attribute has been key to Chobani's success in positioning itself as an alternative to mainstream yogurt brands. Consumers love the rags-to-riches story about an entrepreneur who bought an old Kraft Foods plant in New York State and created a brand new product that is less fattening than other alternatives. That story has been repeated thousands of times by the media, resulting in free advertising worth more than $3 million. Indeed, people loved the story so much that many of them learned to like the yogurt despite the taste, which is sourer than they're used to. Greek yogurt now accounts for more than a third of all yogurt sales in the United States.

Archrival Yoplait (owned by mega-company General Mills) countered with various attempts to sell its own version of Greek yogurt, but consumers weren't having it. Now, General Mills is taking a different tack: Yoplait scoured its French history and discovered its own story: For centuries (or so the story goes), French farmers have made yogurt by putting milk, fruit, and cultures into glass jars and then setting them aside. So Yoplait



Yoplait's new yogurt brand emphasizes cultural authenticity.
Source: Image courtesy of Yoplait USA.

tweaked its recipe and began buying glass jars for its new brand of Oui yogurt. According to a company executive, " . . . the simplicity of this idea, that this is a French method, coming from a French brand, with a French name, that's authenticity."[54]

Decision Rules

Under conditions of high cognitive involvement, people tend to think carefully about the pros and cons of various options, almost like a computer that would follow a somewhat complicated formula to make a decision. This is a **compensatory rule**; it allows a product to make up for its shortcomings on one dimension by excelling on another. There are two basic types of compensatory rules:

1. The **simple additive rule** leads to the option that has the largest number of positive attributes. A person may use this process when it's difficult to get more information. It's not the best solution because some of the attributes may not be meaningful to the customer. Thus, we may be impressed by a brand that boasts a laundry list of features even though most of them are not determinant attributes.
2. A **weighted additive rule** allows the consumer to take into account the relative importance of the attributes by weighting each one. If this sounds familiar, it should: The calculation process strongly resembled the multiattribute attitude model we discussed in Chapter 8.

Compensatory rules require the decision maker to carefully consider the attributes of competing options, but we all know that we don't necessarily do that. When we make habitual or emotional decisions we typically use a **noncompensatory rule**.[55] This means that if an option doesn't suit us on one dimension, we just reject it out of hand and move on to something else rather than think about how it might meet our needs in other ways: "I've never heard of that brand," or maybe "That color is gross."

- The **lexicographic rule** says, "select the brand that is the best on the most important attribute." If a decision maker feels that two or more brands are equally good on that attribute, he or she then compares them on the second-most important attribute. This selection process goes on until the tie is broken. In Richard's case, because both the Prime Wave and Precision models were tied on his most important attribute (a 60-inch screen), he chose the Precision because of its rating on his second-most important attribute: its stereo capability.
- The **elimination-by-aspects rule** is similar to the lexicographic rule because the buyer also evaluates brands on the most important attribute. In this case, though, he or she imposes specific cut-offs. For example, if Richard had been more interested in having a sleep timer on his TV (i.e., if it had a higher importance ranking), he might have stipulated that his choice "must have a sleep timer." Because the Prime Wave model had one and the Precision did not, he would have chosen the Prime Wave.
- Whereas the two former rules involve processing by attribute, the **conjunctive rule** entails processing by brand. As with the elimination-by-aspects procedure, the decision maker establishes cut-offs for each attribute. He chooses a brand if it meets all the cutoffs, but rejects a brand that fails to meet any one cut-off. If none of the brands meet all the cutoffs, he may delay the choice, change the decision rule, or modify the cutoffs he chooses to apply.

If Richard stipulated that all attributes had to be rated "good" or better, he would not have been able to choose any of the available options. He might then have modified his decision rule, conceding that it was not possible to attain these high standards in his price range. In this case, perhaps Richard could decide that he could live without on-screen programming, so he would reconsider the Precision model.

If we're willing to allow good and bad product qualities to cancel each other out, we arrive at a different choice. For example, if Richard were not concerned about having stereo reception, he might have chosen the Prime Wave model. But because this brand doesn't feature this highly ranked attribute, it doesn't stand a chance when he uses a noncompensatory rule.

OBJECTIVE 9-3
We often rely on rules-of-thumb to make routine decisions.

Habitual Decision Making

Richard's meditations about the exact TV to buy probably don't resemble most of the choices he makes. If he's anything like most of us, he deals with dozens of decisions every day and he makes most of them almost automatically. "Cream and sugar?" "Fries with that?"

The decision-making steps we've reviewed are well and good, but common sense tells us we don't undergo this elaborate sequence every time we buy something.[56] If we did, we'd spend our entire lives making these decisions. This would leave us little time to enjoy the things we eventually decide to buy. Some of our buying behaviors simply don't seem "rational" because they don't serve a logical purpose (you don't use that navel ring to hold a beach towel).

Habitual decision making describes the choices we make with little or no conscious effort. Many purchase decisions are so routine we may not realize we've made them until we look in our shopping carts! Although decisions we make on the basis of little conscious thought may seem dangerous or at best stupid, this process actually is quite efficient in many cases. The journalist Malcolm Gladwell hit the bestseller list with his book *Blink*, which demonstrated how snap judgments that occur in the blink of an eye can be surprisingly accurate.[57]

When a person buys the same brand over and over, does this mean it's just a habit or is he or she truly loyal to that product? The answer is, it depends: In some cases, the explanation really is just *inertia*, which means that it involves less effort to throw a familiar package into the cart. *Brand loyalty* is a totally different story. This describes a pattern of repeat purchasing behavior that involves a *conscious decision* to continue buying the same brand.

As you might imagine, though both inertia and brand loyalty yield the same result the latter is harder to achieve, but also much more valuable because it represents a true commitment by the consumer. One simple test that may help to tell the difference: If the consumer discovers that a store is out of his or her normal brand, will he or she just choose another one or defer the purchase to find this brand somewhere else? If the answer is "my way or the highway," that marketer has a loyal customer.

Heuristics: Mental Shortcuts

The default bias we previously described illustrates that we often take the easy way out when we make decisions. Unlike the cognitive decision strategies we've already described we use when we want to arrive at the best result possible—a **maximizing solution**—in fact we often are quite content to exert less mental effort and simply receive an adequate outcome—a **satisficing solution**. This "good enough" perspective on decision making is called **bounded rationality**.

We've seen that many habitual decisions we make are subject to mental accounting biases. In addition, we often fall back on other shortcuts to simplify our choices. For example, Richard made certain assumptions instead of conducting an extensive information search. In particular, he assumed that the selection at Zany Zack's was more than sufficient, so he did not bother to shop at any other stores.[58]

TABLE 9.2 Market Beliefs

Brand	All brands are basically the same.
	Generic products are just name brands sold under a different label at a lower price.
	The best brands are the ones that are purchased the most.
	When in doubt, a national brand is always a safe bet.
Store	Specialty stores are great places to familiarize yourself with the best brands. But once you figure out what you want, it's cheaper to buy it at a discount outlet.
	A store's character is reflected in its window displays.
	Salespeople in specialty stores are more knowledgeable than other sales personnel.
	Larger stores offer better prices than small stores.
	Locally owned stores give the best service.
	A store that offers a good value on one of its products probably offers good values on all of its items.
	Credit and return policies are most lenient at large department stores.
	Stores that have just opened usually charge attractive prices.
Prices/Discounts/Sales	Sales are typically run to get rid of slow-moving merchandise.
	Stores that are constantly having sales don't really save you money.
	Within a given store, higher prices generally indicate higher quality.
Advertising and Sales Promotion	"Hard-sell" advertising is associated with low-quality products.
	Items tied to "giveaways" are not a good value (even with the freebie).
	Coupons represent real savings for customers because they are not offered by the store.
	When you buy heavily advertised products, you are paying for the label, not for higher quality.
Product/Packaging	Largest-sized containers are almost always cheaper per unit than smaller sizes.
	New products are more expensive when they're first introduced; prices tend to settle down as time goes by.
	When you are not sure what you need in a product, it's a good idea to invest in the extra features, because you'll probably wish you had them later.
	In general, synthetic goods are lower in quality than goods made of naturals materials.
	It's advisable to stay away from products when they are new to the market; it usually takes the manufacturer a little time to work the bugs out.

Source: Data from Calvin P. Duncan, "Consumer Market Beliefs: A Review of the Literature and an Agenda for Future Research," in Marvin E. Goldberg, Gerald Gorn, and Richard W. Pollay, eds., *Advances in Consumer Research* 17 (Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 1990): 729–35.

We refer to these shortcuts as **heuristics**. These "mental rules-of-thumb" range from the general ("higher-priced products are higher-quality products" or "buy the same brand I bought last time") to the specific ("buy Domino, the brand of sugar my mother always bought").[59] Sometimes these shortcuts may not be in our best interests. A car shopper who personally knows one or two people who have had problems with a particular vehicle, for example, might assume that he would have similar trouble with it rather than taking the time to find out that it actually has an excellent repair record.[60] Table 9.2 lists a set of **market beliefs** that many of us share. Let's summarize a few of the most prevalent heuristics we commonly use.

Covariation

A person who sells a used car probably makes sure the car's exterior is clean and shiny. Potential buyers often judge the vehicle's mechanical condition by its appearance, even though this means they may drive away in a clean, shiny clunker.[61] When we only have incomplete product information, we often base our judgments on our

beliefs about **covariation**—our associations among events that may or may not actually influence one another.[62]

Country of Origin

A product's "address" matters. We Americans like to buy Italian shoes, Japanese cars, and microwave ovens built in South Korea. Consumers strongly associate certain items with specific countries, and products from those countries often attempt to benefit from these linkages. That's why **country of origin (COO)** often is an important heuristic. Indeed, marketers often go out of their way to link a brand with a country to capitalize on associations people have with a specific COO: French wines, Italian sports cars, even Häagen-Dazs ice cream with that authentic Danish taste (but actually owned by Nestlé and made in Scandinavian strongholds like New Jersey).

COO effects have a dark side, as well. **Ethnocentrism** refers to the belief that products from other places are inferior to local versions.[63] This may stem from a person's fear that imported products are a threat to the domestic economy, or perhaps to a general assumption that one's own culture produces superior things in general. And, of course there's the "buy local" movement that emphasizes the desirability of buying products that are made within 50 to 100 miles of the point of purchase in order to minimize the carbon footprint involved in shipping them to stores.

More generally, we sometimes witness **consumer animosity** toward a brand due to an intense dislike for the manufacturer.[64] Sometimes this feeling surfaces for political or social reasons: For example, almost half of Canadians say they would boycott products



A Dutch shoe ad reminds us that a product's address matters.
Source: Courtesy of Grey/Copenhagen.

and venues that bear the "Trump" brand, and many stores stopped carrying Ivanka Trump products after the 2016 election.[65] Social media spurs these boycotts, and websites like *Grab Your Wallet* publish lists of companies that are linked to controversial issues.

Familiar Brand Names

In a study the Boston Consulting Group conducted of the market leaders in 30 product categories, 27 of the brands that were number one in 1930 (such as Ivory Soap and Campbell's Soup) still were at the top more than 50 years later.[66]

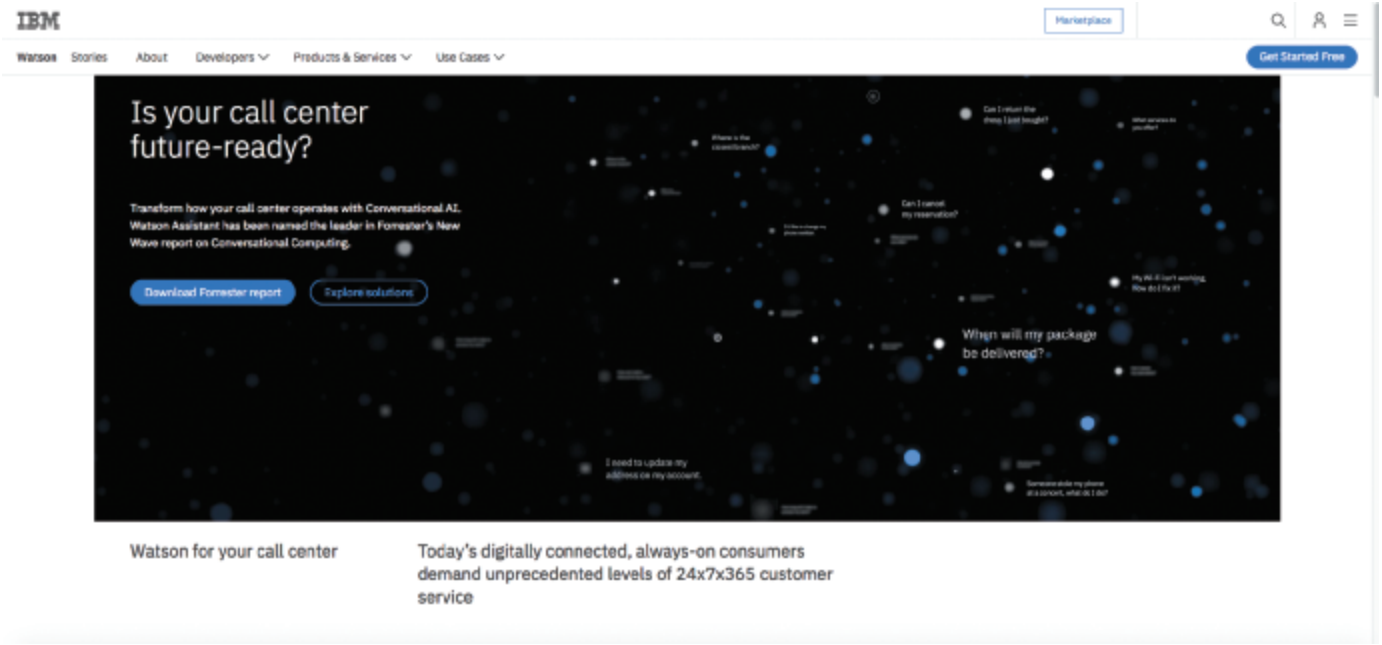
Higher Prices

Many people assume that a higher-priced alternative is better quality than a lower-priced option.[67] This assumption is often correct; you do tend to get what you pay for. However, let the buyer beware: The price–quality relationship is not always justified.[68]

AI: Who's Calling the Shots?

Whether or not you think we're about to enslaved by robots, there's no doubt that AI applications will revolutionize how consumers interact with products—and very soon. Innovative companies are already experimenting with AI personal shoppers that can help their customers to decide what to buy. Here are three examples of what's already here:

- Outdoor brand The North Face partners with IBM's Watson AI platform to use natural conversation and a dialogue-based recommendation engine to help users of the brand's site pick out the jacket that best fits their needs. A customer simply tells the platform when and where they'd like to use the jacket, and then answers additional questions to refine the results.[69]
- KFC China teamed up with the huge Chinese search engine Baidu to develop AI-enabled facial recognition checkout. It predicts what menu items customers will order based upon their age, gender, and mood. Over time, the AI will recognize repeat customers and offer them what they ordered on prior visits. Thus a younger male might get a recommendation for a crispy chicken hamburger, while



AI (artificial intelligence) applications are coming to call centers. Eventually they will be able to diagnose a caller's personality and match him or her with a compatible chatbot in order to insure a smooth interaction.
Source: Reprint Courtesy of International Business Machines Corporation, © International Business Machines Corporation.

the AI will suggest porridge and soybean milk to a women in her 50s (wow, automated gender stereotyping?).[70]

- West Elm uses an AI application to generate recommendations for specific furnishing products it sells based upon what a shopper pins to a Pinterest Board. The company also is able to **upsell** (encouraging customers to buy additional items) due to the suggestions.[71]

Priming and Nudging

OBJECTIVE 9-4
The way information about a product choice is framed can prime a decision even when the consumer is unaware of this influence.

Remember that in earlier chapters we talked about how physical cues "prime" us to react even when we're not aware of this impact. The sensations we experience are **context effects** that subtly influence how we think about products we encounter. Here are some examples from consumer research:

- Respondents evaluated products more harshly when they stood on a tile floor rather than a carpeted floor.[72]
- Fans of romance movies rate them higher when they watch them in a cold room (the researchers explain this is because they compensate for the low physical temperature with psychological warmth the movie provides).[73]
- When a product is scented, consumers are more likely to remember other attributes about it after they encounter it.[74]

Researchers continue to identify factors that bias our decisions, and many of these are factors that operate beneath the level of conscious awareness.[75] In one study, respondents' attitudes toward an undesirable product—curried grasshoppers!—improved when they were asked to approach it. This physical movement typically links to liking; even our own body movements or other physiological reactions can influence what goes on in our minds.[76] To help understand this process, try to force yourself to smile or frown and then carefully gauge your feelings; you may find that the old prescription to "put on a happy face" to cheer yourself up may actually have some validity.[77]

Often it's just a matter of **framing**, or how we pose the question to people or what exactly we ask them to do. For example, people hate losing things more than they like getting things; economists call this tendency **loss aversion**. In one study, teachers who had the opportunity to improve student performance didn't make the grade in terms of improved test scores. However, those who got extra money at the beginning of the year and were told they would lose it if their students did not show sufficient progress managed to bring up their scores.

To see how framing works, consider the following scenario: You've scored a free ticket to a sold-out football game. At the last minute, though, a sudden snowstorm makes it somewhat dangerous to get to the stadium. Would you still go? Now, assume the same game and snowstorm—except this time you paid a small fortune for the ticket. Would you head out in the storm in this case?

Researchers who work on **prospect theory** analyze how the value of a decision depends on gains or losses; they identify principles of **mental accounting** that relate to the way we frame the question as well as external issues that shouldn't influence our choices, but do anyway. In this case, researchers find that people are more likely to risk their personal safety in the storm if they *paid* for the football ticket than if it's a freebie. Only the most die-hard fan would fail to recognize that this is an irrational choice because the risk is the same regardless of whether you got a great deal on the ticket. Researchers call this decision-making bias the **sunk-cost fallacy**: If we've paid for something, we're more reluctant to waste it.

The notion that even subtle changes in a person's environment can strongly influence the choices he or she makes has emerged on center stage in the study of consumer behavior in recent years. Unlike standard economic theory that regards people as rational decision makers, the rapidly growing field of **behavioral economics** focuses on the effects of psychological and social factors on the economic decisions we make, and many of these choices are anything but "rational." Indeed it turns out that it's quite possible to modify the choices of individuals and groups merely by tinkering with the way we present information to them.

This research holds enormous implications, especially for public policy issues because it turns out the way organizations frame their messages can exert a big influence on the numbers of consumers who will stop smoking, eat healthy foods, or save more money for retirement. There are important ethical issues as well, especially as studies continue to identify ways that organizations including governments and companies can subtly but powerfully influence what we "freely" choose to do.[78]

Much of the emerging work in behavioral economics focuses on the role of **priming**: Cues in the environment that make us more likely to react in a certain way even though we're unaware of these influences. A *prime* is a stimulus that encourages people to focus on some specific aspect of their lives such as their financial well-being or the environment:

- A group of undergraduates was primed to think about money; they saw phrases like "she spends money liberally," or pictures that would make them think of money. Then this group and a control group that wasn't focused on money answered questions about moral choices they would make. Those students who had been primed to think of money consistently exhibited weaker ethics. They were more likely to say they would steal a ream of paper from the university's copying room and more likely to say they would lie for financial gain.[79]
- When people see pictures of "cute" products, they are more likely to engage in indulgent behavior such as eating larger portions of ice cream.[80]
- In a field study in a wine store, researchers played either stereotypically French or German music on alternate days. On the days when French music was in the background, people bought more French versus German wine and the reverse happened on German music days. Follow-up questionnaires indicated customers were not aware of the impact of the music on their choices.[81]

Much of the current work in behavioral economics demonstrates how a **nudge**—a deliberate change by an organization that intends to modify behavior—can result in dramatic effects.[82] A simple "nudge" that changes how people act is to switch from asking consumers to "opt in" to a program to asking them to "opt out" of a program if they don't want to participate. In Europe, countries that ask drivers to indicate if they want to be an organ donor convince less than 20 percent of drivers to do so. In contrast, those that require drivers to opt out if they *don't* want to be donors get more than 95 percent participation.

This **default bias**—where we are more likely to comply with a requirement than to make the effort not to comply—can be applied to numerous choice situations. For example, people are more likely to save for retirement if their employers automatically deduct a set amount from their paychecks than if they have to set up this process themselves. It is also how many software companies and social media platforms encourage users to adopt their products and privacy policies (e.g., when you must opt out of Facebook's right to share your data with others).[83]

Priming and nudging tactics are increasingly common. In the U.K. there is even a government-affiliated organization called the Behavioural Insights Team—a.k.a. The Ministry of Nudges![84] In some cases, this approach goes by the more benign name of **persuasive design**. It can cut both ways, as some companies take advantage of the

power of nudges to encourage behaviors we'd rather not do. For example, some organizations use the "sneak into basket" technique, where a retailer automatically adds products—such as a magazine subscription or travel insurance—to consumers' shopping carts and makes it hard for them to remove the unwanted items. Or, how about the ominous-sounding "roach motel," where websites sites offer fast-and-easy sign-up processes but make it much more cumbersome for consumers to close accounts ("roaches get in, but they don't get out").[85]

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. **The three categories of consumer decision making are cognitive, habitual, and affective.**

   Consumer decision making is a central part of consumer behavior, but the way we evaluate and choose products (and the amount of thought we put into these choices) varies widely, depending on such dimensions as the degree of novelty or risk related to the decision. We almost constantly need to make decisions about products. Some of these decisions are important and entail great effort, whereas we make others on a virtually automatic basis. Perspectives on decision making range from a focus on habits that people develop over time to novel situations involving a great deal of risk in which consumers must carefully collect and analyze information before making a choice. Many of our decisions are highly automated; we make them largely by habit. The way we evaluate and choose a product depends on our degree of involvement with the product, the marketing message, or the purchase situation. Product involvement can range from low, where purchase decisions are made via inertia, to high, where consumers form strong bonds with what they buy.

2. **A cognitive purchase decision is the outcome of a series of stages that results in the selection of one product over competing options.**

   A typical decision involves several steps. The first is problem recognition, when we realize we must take some action. This recognition may occur because a current possession malfunctions or perhaps because we have a desire for something new. Once the consumer recognizes a problem and sees it as sufficiently important to warrant some action, he or she begins the process of information search. This search may range from performing a simple memory scan to determining what he or she has done before to resolve the same problem to extensive fieldwork during which he or she consults a variety of sources to amass as much information as possible. The internet has changed the way many of us search for information. Today, our problem is more likely to weed out excess detail than to search for more information. Comparative search sites and intelligent agents help to filter and guide the search process. We may rely on cybermediaries, such as web portals, to sort through massive amounts of information as a way to simplify the decision-making process. In the evaluation of alternatives stage, the options a person considers constitute his or her evoked set. Members of the evoked set usually share some characteristics; we categorize them similarly. The way the person mentally groups products influences which alternatives she will consider, and usually we associate some brands more strongly with these categories (i.e., they are more prototypical). When the consumer eventually must make a product choice from among alternatives, he uses one of several decision rules. Noncompensatory rules eliminate alternatives that are deficient on any of the criteria we've chosen. Compensatory rules, which we are more likely to apply in high-involvement situations, allow us to consider each alternative's good and bad points more carefully to arrive at the overall best choice. Once the consumer makes a choice, he or she engages in post-purchase evaluation to determine whether it was a good one; this assessment in turn influences the process the next time the problem occurs.

3. We often rely on rules-of-thumb to make routine decisions.

In many cases, people engage in surprisingly little research. Instead, they rely on various mental shortcuts, such as brand names or price, or they may simply imitate others' choices. We may use heuristics, or mental rules-of-thumb, to simplify decision making. In particular, we develop many market beliefs over time. One of the most common beliefs is that we can determine quality by looking at the price. Other heuristics rely on well-known brand names or a product's country of origin as signals of product quality. When we consistently purchase a brand over time, this pattern may be the result of true brand loyalty or simply inertia because it's the easiest thing to do.

4. The way information about a product choice is framed can prime a decision even when the consumer is unaware of this influence.

Principles of mental accounting demonstrate that the way a problem is framed and whether it is put in terms of gains or losses influences what we decide. In addition, other cues in the environment—including subtle ones of which we may not even be aware—may prime us to choose one option over another. A prime is a stimulus that encourages people to focus on some specific aspect of their lives. Much of the current work in behavioral economics demonstrates how a nudge—a deliberate change by an organization that intends to modify behavior—can result in dramatic effects.

KEY TERMS

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REVIEW

9-1 Why can "mindless" decision making actually be *more* efficient than devoting a lot of thought to what we buy?

9-2 List the steps in the model of cognitive decision making.

9-3 What is purchase momentum, and how does it relate (or not relate) to the model of rational decision making?

9-4 Give an example of the type of purchase that each of the three types of decision making—cognitive, habitual, and affective—would most likely explain.

9-5 Name two ways in which a consumer problem arises.
9-6 Give an example of the sunk-cost fallacy.
9-7 What is prospect theory? Does it support the argument that we are rational decision makers?
9-8 "Marketers need to be extra sure their product works as promised when they first introduce it." How does this statement relate to what we know about consumers' evoked sets?
9-9 Describe the difference between a superordinate category, a basic level category, and a subordinate category.
9-10 What is an example of an exemplar product?
9-11 List three product attributes that consumers use as product quality signals and provide an example of each.
9-12 How does a brand name work as a heuristic?
9-13 Describe the difference between inertia and brand loyalty.
9-14 What is the difference between a noncompensatory and a compensatory decision rule? Give one example of each.
9-15 What is a prime? How does it differ from a nudge?

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

9-16 Excessive food consumption may link to emotional issues such as feelings of inferiority or low self-esteem. In some situations people consume products (especially food) as a reaction to prior life experiences such as loss of a loved one or perhaps abuse as a child. A British man whom the U.K. news media once dubbed "the world's fattest man" when he weighed in at 980 pounds is a case in point. He explained that as an adult his insatiable desire to constantly eat stemmed from an abusive father and sexual abuse by a relative: "I still had all these things going around in my head from my childhood. Food replaced the love I didn't get from my parents." (The good news: after a gastric bypass operation this man has lost almost two-thirds of his body weight).[86] Obviously this is an extreme case, and it certainly doesn't mean that everyone who struggles with his or her weight is a victim of abuse! Nonetheless, emotion often plays a role—a dieter may feel elated when he weighs in at three pounds less than last week; however, if he fails to make progress he may become discouraged and actually sabotage himself with a Krispy Kreme binge.[87] Is it ethical for food companies to exploit these issues by linking their products to enhanced moods?

9-17 The chapter discusses ways that organizations can use "nudges" to change consumer behavior. Critics refer to them as *benevolent paternalism* because they argue they force people to "eat their vegetables" by restricting the freedom to choose. For example, several cities, including New York and Philadelphia, have tried (unsuccessfully thus far) to ban the sales of extra large portions of sugary drinks. What's your take on these efforts—should local, state, or federal governments be in the business of nudging citizens to be healthier?

9-18 Why is it difficult to place a product in a consumer's evoked set after the person has already rejected that product? What strategies might a marketer use to accomplish this goal?

9-19 Technology has the potential to make our lives easier as it reduces the amount of clutter we need to work through to access the information on the internet that really interests us. However, perhaps intelligent agents that make recommendations based only on what we and others like us have chosen in the past limit us, in that they reduce the chance that we will stumble on something (e.g., a book on a topic we've never heard of or a music group that's different from the style we usually listen to) through serendipity. Will the proliferation of "shopping bots" make our lives too predictable by only giving us more of the same? If so, is this a problem?

9-20 It's increasingly clear that many postings on blogs and product reviews on websites are fake or are posted there to manipulate consumers' opinions. How big a problem is this if consumers increasingly look to consumer-generated product reviews during the stage of information search? What steps, if any, can marketers take to nip this problem in the bud?

9-21 Commercial Alert, a consumer group, is highly critical of neuromarketing. The group's executive director wrote, "What would happen in this country if corporate marketers and political consultants could literally peer inside our brains and chart the neural activity that leads to our selections in the supermarket and voting booth? What if they then could trigger this

neural activity by various means, so as to modify our behavior to serve their own ends?"[88] What do you think? Is neuromarketing dangerous?

9-22 Research supports the argument that the way we pay for a product changes the way we perceive it. More specifically, credit cards prime people to focus less on the costs of the item and more on the benefits. Using plastic decouples the expense of the purchase so we tend to buy more when we can charge it.[89] Newer innovations like digital wallets take this a step further so payment—at least at the time of purchase—is even less painful. Are these formats going to create problems if they prime us to think more about short-term gratification and less about the long-term hit to our budgets? Do marketers have an obligation to try to prevent these problems?

9-23 Country of origin can discourage sales in some situations, and in some cases this is due to deeply held moral views. For example, some Jews refuse to buy cars made by Mercedes-Benz and other German automakers due to their use of slave labor to make vehicles during World War II.[90] Should a company bear responsibility for decisions its predecessors made?

▶ APPLY

9-24 Find examples of electronic recommendation agents on the web. Evaluate these. Are they helpful? What characteristics of the sites you locate are likely to make you buy products you wouldn't have bought on your own?

9-25 Sometimes a company actually invents a determinant attribute: Pepsi-Cola accomplished this when it stamped freshness dates on soda cans. It spent about $25 million on an advertising and promotional campaign to convince consumers that there's nothing quite as horrible as a stale can of soda—even though people in the industry estimate that drinkers consume 98 percent of all cans well before this could be a problem. Six months after it introduced the campaign, lo and behold, an independent survey found that 61 percent of respondents felt that freshness dating is an important attribute for a soft drink![91] Devise a similar strategy for another product category by coming up with a completely new product attribute. How would you communicate this attribute to your customers?

9-26 Define the three levels of product categorization the chapter describes. Diagram these levels for a health club.

9-27 Choose a friend or parent who grocery shops on a regular basis and keep a log of his or her purchases of common consumer products during the term. Can you detect any evidence of brand loyalty in any categories based on consistency of purchases? If so, talk to the person about these purchases. Try to determine if his or her choices are based on true brand loyalty or on inertia. What techniques might you use to differentiate between the two?

9-28 Hershey's stresses the determinant attribute of product authenticity when the chocolate company states: "Hershey, PA is where it all started more than 100 years ago, and it's still where the famous Hershey's Kisses are made."[92] Find examples of other companies that appeal to their heritage. How effective are these messages?

9-29 Form a group of three. Pick a product and develop a marketing plan based on either cognitive or habitual decision making. What are the major differences in emphasis between the two perspectives? Which is the most likely type of decision-making process for the product you selected?

9-30 Identify a person who is about to make a major purchase. Ask that person to make a chronological list of all the information sources he or she consults before deciding what to buy. How would you characterize the types of sources he or she uses (i.e., internal versus external, media versus personal, and so on)? Which sources appeared to have the most impact on the person's decision?

9-31 Perform a survey of country of origin stereotypes. Compile a list of five countries and ask people what products they associate with each. What are their evaluations of the products and likely attributes of these different products? The power of a country stereotype can also be demonstrated in another way. Prepare a brief description of a product, including a list of features, and ask people to rate it in terms of quality, likelihood of purchase, and so on. Make several versions of the description, varying only the country from which it comes. Do ratings change as a function of the country of origin?

9-32 Ask a friend to "talk through" the process he or she used to choose one brand rather than others during a recent purchase. Based on this description, can you identify the decision rule that he or she most likely employed?

9-33 Think of a product you recently shopped for online. Describe your search process. How did you

become aware that you wanted or needed the product? How did you evaluate alternatives? Did you wind up buying online? Why or why not? What factors would make it more or less likely that you would buy something online versus in a traditional store?

9-34 Can you replicate Richard's decision-making process as he chose a TV brand for other consumers or other products? Create a grid for a different product category that lists available brands and the features each offers. (Hint: Product websites for computers, cars, and other complex products often generate these grids when they allow you to choose the "compare products" option.) Present this grid to several respondents and ask each to talk aloud as they evaluate their options. Based on their description, can you identify which decision rule they seem to use?

9-35 Extraneous characteristics of the choice situation can influence our selections, even though they wouldn't *if* we were totally rational decision makers. Create two versions of this scenario (alternate the text you see in parentheses as directed) and ask a separate group of people to respond to each:

> You are lying on the beach on a hot day. All you have to drink is ice water. For the past hour you have been thinking about how much you would enjoy a nice cold bottle of your favorite brand of beer. A companion gets up to go make a phone call and offers to bring back a beer from the only nearby place where beer is sold (either a fancy resort hotel or a small, run-down grocery store, depending on the version you're given). He says that the beer might be expensive and so asks how much you are willing to pay for it. What price do you tell him?

When researchers gave both versions of this question to respondents, they found that the median price participants who read the fancy-resort version gave was $2.65, but those who got the grocery-store version were only willing to pay $1.50. In both versions, the consumption act is the same, the beer is the same, and they don't consume any "atmosphere" because they drink the beer on the beach.[93] How do these results compare to yours?

CASE STUDY

P&G and the Moments of Truth—Just How Many Moments Are There?

As you are learning in this course, a consumer's journey to a buying decision has several steps and there are many factors that influence the choices made at each point in the process. P&G, the world's largest consumer products manufacturer, has explained this as the *Moments of Truth*.[94,95] The company started with two, added another, and other marketing experts now believe there are many more moments that marketers must consider when interacting with consumers.

The concept of the Moment of Truth began in the 1980s with Jan Carlzon, president of Scandinavian Airlines, who said, "Any time a customer comes into contact with a business, however remote, they have an opportunity to form an impression." He believed that if a company managed that interaction to a positive outcome the company would be successful. In 2005, former P&G CEO A.G. Lafley refocused the concept from customer service to sales, and broke the process down into two big steps: the first moment (FMOT) when the customer is looking at the product in the store, comparing it to alternatives on the shelf, and the second (SMOT) that occurs when the customer is using the product at home.[96] Later, ex-P&G brand manager Pete Blackshaw suggested a third important moment (TMOT) when customers provide feedback about their purchase to the company and to friends and family.[97]

Remember the *Star Wars* "prequels"? Well, in 2011 Google introduced a prequel of sorts to this moment of truth concept with its Zero Moment of Truth—ZMOT. This moment is focused on the internet research that consumers do before they buy, which is standard practice today for products of all kinds. ZMOT was born from a Google study that found that 50 percent of shoppers used a search engine for product or brand research. They also learned that for some purchases, consumers were spending more time at the ZMOT stage than FMOT.[98] Convinced, P&G updated its process to include ZMOT, FMOT, and SMOT.

FMOT, SMOT, TMOT, ZMOT—are you keeping up? But wait—recently, marketing firm eventricity LTD added <ZMOT (Less than Zero Moment of Truth). This is something that happens in the consumer's life—a stimulus—that motivates him or her to begin doing research, leading to the Zero Moment.[99]

A final moment is what one expert calls the Actual Moment of Truth (AMOT) that is focused on the period between when a customer buys a product online until it is received. Developed by Amit Sharma, formerly of both Walmart and Apple, it is designed to prevent companies from dropping the ball after an order is placed, keeping customers informed about the status of their order and making suggestions about their future use of the product.[100]

How does this alphabet soup of terminology drive marketing strategy? For P&G, it became a rallying cry for the CEO to use to focus the work of his marketing team on key points in the consumer journey when the company could win consumers' business. P&G even established a Director of FMOT to lead the production of flashier, sharper in-store displays.[101] It also helped drive marketing investment decisions. P&G is the largest advertiser in the world with a budget of over $7 billion.[102] A significant amount of that spend has been focused on digital advertising, the battleground for ZMOT.

The framework also helps P&G and all marketers understand that the path from stimulus to purchase to brand loyalty is a journey with many important signposts along the way. Google now coaches marketers to consider "micro-moments," those snippets of time when we turn to our mobile devices. Google calls them the "I want-to-know moments, I want-to-go moments, I want-to-do moments, and I want-to-buy moments," when consumers make quick decisions and when preferences are shaped.[103]

Researchers Laurent Muzellece and Eamonn O'Raghallaigh may have the final word with *UMOT*: the Ubiquitous Moment of Truth, suggesting that all of the MOTs in the journey are important and with mobile technology are merging into one synchronous moment.[104] In today's "always on" world, marketers will need a strategy for continually reaching out to consumers with clear and compelling messages that meet their information needs at each point in the buying process.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 9-1 Choose four of the moments of truth. What specific strategies could P&G employ in each one to increase the probability of a sale and repeat business?

CS 9-2 For a consumer purchasing a new car, which would be the first, second, and third most important moments in the process? Explain your prioritization.

CS 9-3 Do frameworks like the MOTs help marketers, or is this just "consultant-speak?" If you believe the approach helps, explain how.

MyLab Marketing

If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

9-36 If people are not always rational decision makers, is it worth the effort to study how they make purchasing decisions?

9-37 Several products made in China (including toothpaste and toys) have been recalled because they are dangerous or even fatal to use. Some American consumers have stopped buying them as a result. Essentially these consumers use country of origin as a heuristic to avoid Chinese products. If the Chinese government hired you as a consultant to help it repair some of the damage to the reputation of products made there, what actions would you recommend?

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10 Buying, Using, and Disposing

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why:

10-1 Many factors at the time of purchase dramatically influence the consumer's decision-making process.

10-2 The information a store's layout, website, or salespeople provides strongly influences a purchase decision.

10-3 The growth of a "sharing economy" changes how many consumers think about buying rather than renting products.

10-4 Our decisions about how to dispose of a product are as important as how we decide to obtain it in the first place.



Source: Mandy Godbehear/Shutterstock.

Kyle is really psyched. The big day has actually arrived: He's going to buy a car! He's had his eye on that silver 2009 Honda Accord parked in the lot of Jon's Auto-Rama for weeks now. Although the sticker says $2,999, Kyle figures he can probably get this baby for a cool $2,000. Besides, Jon's dilapidated showroom and seedy lot make it look like just the kind of place that's hungry to move some cars. Kyle did his homework on the web. First he found out the wholesale value of similar used Accords from the Kelley Blue Book (kbb.com), and then he scouted out some cars for sale in his area at cars.com. So, Kyle figures he's coming in loaded for bear—he's going to show these guys they're not dealing with some newbie. Unlike some of the newer, flashy car showrooms he's been in lately, this place is a real nuts-and-bolts operation; it's so dingy and depressing he can't wait to get out of there and take a shower. Kyle dreads the prospect of haggling over the price, but he hopes to convince the salesperson to take his offer because he knows the real market value of the car he wants. At the Auto-Rama lot, big signs on all the cars proclaim that today is Jon's Auto-Rama Rip Us Off Day! Things look better than Kyle expected—maybe he can get the car for even less than he hoped. He's a bit surprised when a salesperson comes over to him and introduces herself as Kristen. He expected to deal with a middle-aged man in a loud sport coat (a stereotype he has about used-car salespeople), but this is better luck: He reasons that he won't have to be so tough if he negotiates with a woman his age. Kristen laughs when he offers her $1,800 for the Honda; she points out that she can't take such a low bid for such a sweet car to her boss or she'll lose her job. Kristen's enthusiasm for the car convinces

Kyle all the more that he has to have it. When he finally writes a check for $2,700, he's exhausted from all the haggling. What an ordeal! In any case, Kyle reminds himself that he at least convinced Kristen to sell him the car for less than the sticker price, and maybe he can fix it up and sell it for even more in a year or two. That web surfing really paid off: He's a tougher negotiator than he thought.

OBJECTIVE 10-1
Many factors at the time of purchase dramatically influence the consumer's decision-making process.

Situational Effects on Consumer Behavior

Many consumers dread the act of buying a car. But change is in the wind, as dealers transform the car showroom. Car shoppers like Kyle log on to internet buying services, call auto brokers who negotiate for them, buy cars at warehouse clubs, and visit giant auto malls where they can easily comparison shop. Indeed, the average car buyer today visits only 1.6 auto dealerships, as compared to five just a decade ago. Instead they spend about 60% of their shopping time online as they research their options.[1] Kyle's experience when he bought a car illustrates some of the concepts we'll discuss in this chapter. He did a lot of legwork beforehand, and elements of the physical environment where he bought his Honda influenced his decision. Making a purchase is often not a simple, routine matter where you just pop into a store and make a quick choice.

As Figure 10.1 illustrates, many contextual factors affect our choice, such as our mood, whether we feel time pressure to make the purchase, and the particular reason we need the product. In some situations, such as when we buy a car or a home, the salesperson or realtor plays a pivotal role in our final selection. Also, today people like Kyle often use the web to arm themselves with product and price information before they even enter a dealership or a store; this puts more pressure on retailers to deliver the value their customers expect.

The Consumption Situation

A **consumption situation** includes a buyer, a seller, and a product or service—but also many other factors, such as the reason we want to make a purchase and how the physical environment makes us feel.[2] Common sense tells us that we tailor our purchases to specific occasions and that the way we feel at a specific point in time affects what we want to do—or buy. Smart marketers understand these patterns and

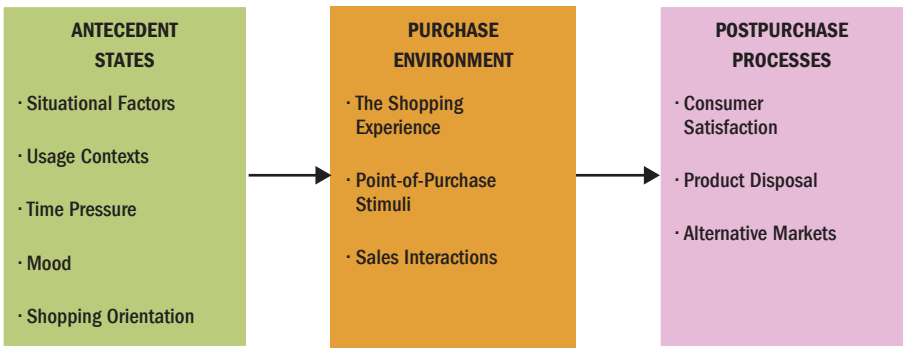


Figure 10.1 ISSUES RELATED TO PURCHASE AND POSTPURCHASE ACTIVITIES

plan their efforts to coincide with situations in which we are most prone to purchase. For example, book clubs invest heavily in promotional campaigns in June because many people want to stock up on "beach books" to read during the summer; for the same reason, we get tons of featured fun fiction books for our Kindles and Nooks in April and May. Our moods even change radically during the day, so at different times we might be more or less interested in what a marketer offers. Social media platforms also are looking at ways to adapt quickly to situational changes. Facebook even looked at the possibility of targeting teenagers who report feeling depressed with ads intended to prey on their down state.[3]

A study used a technique called the *day reconstruction method* to track these changes. More than 900 working women kept diaries of everything they did during the day, from reading the paper in the morning to falling asleep in front of the TV at night. The next day they relived each diary entry and rated how they felt at the time (annoyed, happy, and so on). Overall, researchers found that the study participants woke up a little grumpy but soon entered a state of mild pleasure. This mood increased by degrees through the day, though it was punctuated by occasional bouts of anxiety, frustration, and anger. Not surprisingly, the subjects were least happy when they engaged in mundane activities like commuting to work and doing housework, whereas they rated sex, socializing with friends, and relaxing as most enjoyable. Contrary to prior findings, however, the women were happier when they watched television than when they shopped or talked on the phone. They ranked taking care of children low, below cooking and not far above housework. The good news: Overall, people seem to be pretty happy, and these ratings aren't influenced much by factors such as household income or job security. By far, the two factors that most upset daily moods were a poor night's sleep and tight work deadlines.[4]

In addition to the functional relationships between products and usage situation, another reason to take environmental circumstances seriously is that a person's **situational self-image**—the role he or she plays at any one time—helps to determine what he or she wants to buy or consume.[5] A guy who tries to impress his date as he plays the role of "man-about-town" may spend more lavishly, order champagne instead of beer, and buy flowers: purchases he would never consider when he hangs out with his friends, slurps brew, and plays the role of "one of the boys." Let's see how these dynamics affect the way people think about what they buy.

If we systematically identify important usage situations, we can tailor market segmentation strategies to ensure that our offerings meet the specific needs these situations create. For example, we often tailor our furniture choices to specific settings. We prefer different styles for a city apartment, a beach house, or an executive suite. Similarly, we distinguish motorcycles in terms of how riders use them, including commuting, riding them as dirt bikes, or on a farm versus for highway travel.[6]

Table 10.1 gives one example of how a marketer fine-tunes its segmentation strategy to the usage situation. When we list the major contexts in which people use a product (e.g., snow skiing and sunbathing for a sun screen lotion) and the different types of people who use the product, we can construct a matrix that identifies specific product features we should emphasize for each situation. During the summer, a lotion manufacturer might promote the fact that the bottle floats and is hard to lose, but during the winter season it could tout its nonfreezing formula.

A consumer's physical and social environment affects his or her motives to use a product, as well as how he or she will evaluate the item. Important cues include his or her immediate environment as well as the amount and type of other consumers who are there as well. Dimensions of the physical environment, such as decor, odors, and even temperature, can significantly influence consumption. One study even found that if a Las Vegas casino pumped certain odors into the room, patrons

TABLE 10.1 A Person-Situation Segmentation Matrix for Sun Screen Lotion: Our Social and Physical Surroundings

	Young Children		Teenagers		Adult Women		Adult Men		
Situation	Fair Skin	Dark Skin	Fair Skin	Dark Skin	Fair Skin	Dark Skin	Fair Skin	Dark Skin	Benefits/Features
Beach/boat sunbathing	Combined insect repellent				Summer perfume				a. Product serves as windburn protection b. Formula and container can stand heat c. Container floats and is distinctive (not easily lost)
Home-poolside sunbathing					Combined moisturizer				a. Product has large pump dispenser b. Product won't stain wood, concrete, furnishings
Sunlamp bathing					Combined moisturizer and massage oil				a. Product is designed specifically for type of lamp b. Product has an artificial tanning ingredient
Snow skiing					Winter perfume				a. Product provides special protection from special light rays and weather b. Product has antifreeze formula
Person benefit/ features	Special protection a. Protection is critical b. Formula is non-poisonous		Special protection a. Product fits in jean pocket b. Product used by opinion leaders		Special protection Female perfume		Special protection Male perfume		

Source: Data from Peter R. Dickson, "Person-Situation: Segmentation's Missing Link," *Journal of Marketing* 46 (Fall 1982): 62. American Marketing Association.

fed more money into the slot machines![7] We'll take a closer look at some of these factors a bit later in this chapter when we consider how important store design is to consumer behavior.

Temporal Factors

Time is one of our most precious resources. We talk about "making time" or "spending time," and we frequently remind others that "time is money." Common sense tells us that we think more about what we want to buy when we have the luxury to take our time. Even a normally meticulous shopper who never buys before he or she compares

prices might sprint through the mall at 9:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve to scoop up anything left on the shelves if he or she needs a last-minute gift. The same logic applies to online marketing: **open rates** (the percentage of people who open an email message from a marketer) vary throughout the day. The peak time for high open rates: mid-day on weekdays (presumably when all those people at work take a lunch break).[8]

Time is an economic variable; it is a resource that we must divide among our activities.[9] We try to maximize satisfaction when we allocate our time to different tasks. Of course, people's allocation decisions differ; we all know people who seem to play all of the time, and others who are workaholics. An individual's priorities determine his or her **timestyle**.[10]

Many consumers believe they are more pressed for time than ever before; marketers label this feeling **time poverty**. The problem appears to be more perception than fact. The reality is that we simply have more options for spending our time, so we feel pressured by the weight of all of these choices. In 1965, the average U.S. woman spent about 32 hours per week on housework; the time today is about half of that. Of course, there are plenty of husbands who share these burdens more: The average U.S. man spent just more than 4 hours per week on household tasks and that number has more than doubled. Women report feeling more rushed than men, though even they have more leisure time now than they did in the 1960s (about 30 hours of free time in a typical week).[11]

In addition to physical cues, other people who are in the situation affect purchase decisions. In some cases, the sheer presence or absence of **co-consumers**, the other patrons in a setting, actually is a product attribute; think about an exclusive resort or boutique that promises to provide privacy to privileged customers. At other times, the presence of others can have positive value. A sparsely attended ball game or an empty bar can be a depressing sight. The *type* of consumers who patronize a store or service or who use a product affects our evaluations. We often infer something about a store when we examine its customers. For this reason, some restaurants require men to wear jackets for dinner (and supply rather tacky ones if they don't), and bouncers at some "hot" nightspots handpick people who wait in line based on whether they have the right "look" for the club. To paraphrase the comedian Groucho Marx, "I would never join a club that would have me as a member!"

"Time flies when you're having fun," but other situations (like some classes—but certainly not consumer behavior) seem to last forever. Our experience of time is subjective; our immediate priorities and needs determine how quickly time flies. It's important for marketers to understand **psychological time** because we're more likely to be in a consuming mood at certain times than we are at others.

A study examined how the timestyles of a group of U.S. women influenced their consumption choices.[12] The researchers identified four dimensions of time: (1) the *social dimension* refers to individuals' categorization of time as either "time for me" or "time with/for others"; (2) the *temporal orientation dimension* depicts the relative significance individuals attach to past, present, or future; (3) the *planning orientation dimension* alludes to different time management styles varying on a continuum from analytic to spontaneous; and (4) the *polychronic orientation dimension* distinguishes between people who prefer to do one thing at a time from those who have multitasking timestyles. After they interviewed and observed these women, the researchers identified a set of five metaphors that they say capture the participants' perspectives on time:

- **Time is a pressure cooker**—These women are usually analytical in their planning, other-oriented, and monochronic in their timestyles. They treat shopping in a methodical manner and they often feel under pressure and in conflict.

- **Time is a map**—These women are usually analytical planners; they exhibit a future temporal orientation and a polychronic timestyle. They often engage in extensive-information search and comparison shop.
- **Time is a mirror**—Women in this group are also analytical planners and have a polychronic orientation. However, they have a past temporal orientation. Because of their risk averseness in time use, these women are usually loyal to products and services they know and trust. They prefer convenience-oriented products.
- **Time is a river**—These women are usually spontaneous in their planning orientation and have a present focus. They go on unplanned, short, and frequent shopping trips.
- **Time is a feast**—These women are analytical planners with a present temporal orientation. They view time as something they consume to pursue sensory pleasure and gratification, and for this reason they value hedonic consumption and variety-seeking.

The psychological dimension of time—how we actually experience it—is an important factor in **queuing theory**, the mathematical study of waiting lines. As we all know, our experience when we wait has a big effect on our evaluations of what we get at the end of the wait. Although we assume that something must be pretty good if we have to wait for it, the negative feelings that long waits arouse can quickly turn people off.[13] On the other hand, recent research shows that consumers tend to buy more if they have to wait longer in line. Apparently, they reason that a bigger purchase compensates for the extra time they had to spend waiting.[14] And, we know that waiting seems even longer when we don't know how long the wait will be. Audi recently launched a service that displays the "time to green" on the car's dashboard to tell a driver when a red light will change![15]

The Shopping Experience

OBJECTIVE 10-2
The information a store's layout, website, or salespeople provides strongly influences a purchase decision.

Let's face it: Today most of us never have to visit a "bricks-and-mortar" store to purchase almost anything we want. We have many paths available to us—especially if we like to hibernate in our pajamas at home. Some paths offer great convenience or even significant savings; others stimulate, educate, or even titillate. A woman can order a pair of Vince Camuto ankle strap sandals online and wait for the friendly UPS man to pull up to her door two days later. Or, she can visit a bricks-and-mortar store where a friendly salesperson will fawn over her. She may even take a selfie wearing the shoes, send it out to her "peeps," and get their reactions in real time before she takes the plunge. In all of these scenarios, the shoes get added to the collection that resides in her closet, but the experience of acquiring them is quite different.

So, as fierce as the competition is among brands for your undying devotion, it's perhaps even more heated among retailers that want to lure you to their store or website to actually make the transaction. This is one reason that a management perspective called **design thinking** is so hot right now. It emphasizes the importance of creating products, services, and stores that aren't just pretty. Instead they have to make sense in terms of how customers actually live their lives and use these things. One offshoot of the design thinking revolution is the recognition that managers need to step out of their little boxes and actually cross over to the consumer's perspective to understand their products from the buyer's perspective. For this reason a big buzzword today is the **customer journey**.[16]

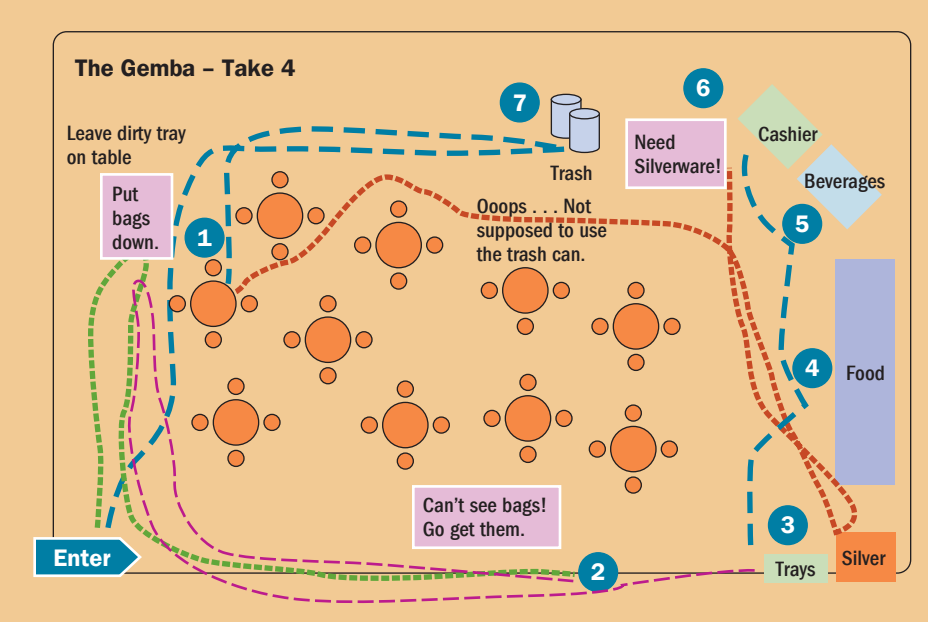


Figure 10.2 GOING TO THE GEMBA
Source: © Quality Function Deployment Institute.

This methodology encourages brands to map out in excruciating detail all the steps a customer takes while they interact with the company—no matter where, and no matter how trivial. It's a powerful way to improve the experience. The journey spans a variety of *touchpoints* by which the customer moves from awareness to engagement and purchase. Successful brands focus on developing a seamless experience that ensures each touchpoint interconnects and contributes to the overall journey.

The consumer journey concept was influenced by the Japanese approach to **total quality management**. To help companies achieve more insight, researchers go to the **gemba**, which to the Japanese means "the one true source of information."[17] According to this philosophy, it's essential to send marketers and designers to the precise place where consumers use the product or service rather than to ask laboratory subjects to use it in a simulated environment.

Figure 10.2 illustrates this idea in practice. Host Foods, which operates food concessions in major airports, sent a team to the *gemba*—in this case, an airport cafeteria—to identify problem areas. Employees watched as customers entered the facility, and then followed them as they inspected the menu, procured silverware, paid, and found a table. The findings were crucial to Host's redesign of the facility. For example, the team identified a common problem that many people traveling solo experience: the need to put down your luggage to enter the food line and the feeling of panic you get because you're not able to keep an eye on your valuables when you get your meal. This simple insight allowed Host to modify the design of its facilities to improve a patron's line-of-sight between the food area and the tables.[18]

Mood

In Chapter 5 we discussed how our mood at the time of purchase can really affect what we feel like buying.[19] If you don't believe it, try grocery shopping on an empty stomach! Or make a decision when you're stressed, and you'll understand how a physiological state impairs information-processing and problem-solving abilities.[20]

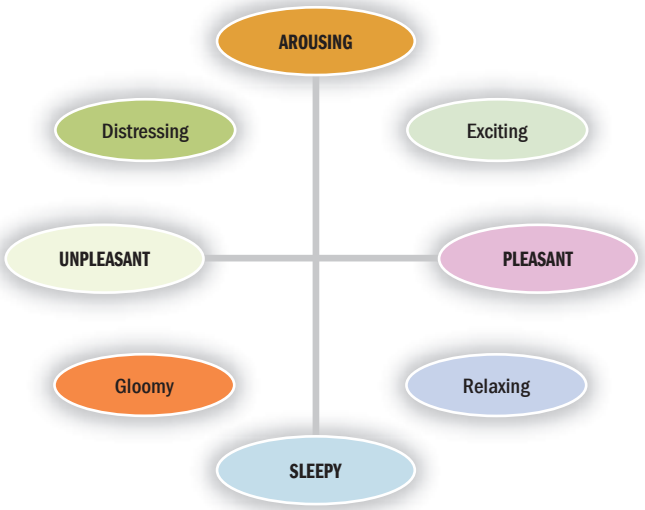


Figure 10.3 DIMENSIONS OF EMOTIONAL STATES

Two basic dimensions, *pleasure* and *arousal*, determine whether we will react positively or negatively to a consumption environment.[21] What it boils down to is that you can either enjoy or not enjoy a situation, and you can feel stimulated or not. As Figure 10.3 indicates, different combinations of pleasure and arousal levels result in a variety of emotional states. An arousing situation can be either distressing or exciting, depending on whether the context is positive or negative (e.g., a street riot versus a street festival). So, a specific mood is some combination of pleasure and arousal. The state of happiness is high in pleasantness and moderate in arousal, whereas elation is high on both dimensions.[22] A mood state (either positive or negative) biases our judgments of products and services in that direction.[23] Put simply, we give more positive evaluations when we're in a good mood (this explains the popularity of the business lunch!).

Many factors, including store design, the weather, and whether you just had a fight with your significant other, affect your mood. Music and television programming do as well.[24] When we hear happy music or watch happy programs, we experience more positive reactions to commercials and products.[25] And when we're in a good mood, we process ads with less elaboration. We pay less attention to the specifics of the message and we rely more on heuristics (see Chapter 9).[26]

When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Go Shopping

We all know some people who shop simply for the sport of it, and others whom we have to drag kicking and screaming to a mall. Shopping is how we acquire needed products and services, but social motives for shopping also are important. Thus, shopping is an activity that we can perform for either utilitarian (functional or tangible) or hedonic (pleasurable or intangible) reasons.[27]

So, do people hate to shop or love it? We segment consumers in terms of their **shopping orientation**, or general attitudes about shopping. These orientations vary depending on the particular product categories and store types we consider. One consumer might hate to shop for a car, but love to browse in used vinyl record stores.



The business lunch is a tried-and-true way to get clients in a good mood.
Source: sirtravelalot/Shutterstock.

A shopper's motivation influences the type of shopping environment that will be attractive or annoying; for example, a person who wants to locate and buy something quickly may find loud music, bright colors, or complex layouts distracting, whereas someone who is there to browse may enjoy the sensory stimulation.[28]

Some scale items that researchers use to assess our shopping motivations illustrate the diverse reasons we may shop. One item that measures hedonic value is "During the trip, I felt the excitement of the hunt." When we compare that type of sentiment to a functional statement, "I accomplished just what I wanted to on this shopping trip," there's a clear contrast between these two dimensions.[29] Hedonic shopping motives include the following:[30]

- **Social experiences**—The shopping center or department store replaces the traditional town square or county fair as a community gathering place. Many people (especially in suburban or rural areas) have almost no other places to spend their leisure time. Shopping centers often serve as a secure environment for the elderly, and many malls now feature "mall walkers' clubs" for early morning workouts.
- **Sharing of common interests**—Stores frequently offer specialized goods that allow people with shared interests to communicate.
- **Status**—As every salesperson knows, some people savor the experience of being waited on, even though they may not necessarily buy anything. One men's clothing salesman offered this advice: "Remember their size, remember what you sold them last time. Make them feel important! If you can make people feel important, they are going to come back. Everybody likes to feel important!"[31] When a team of researchers conducted in-depth interviews with women to understand what makes shopping a pleasurable experience, they found one motivation was role-playing. For example, one respondent dressed up for shopping excursions to upscale boutiques because she liked to pretend she was wealthy and have salespeople fall all over her.[32]
- **The thrill of the hunt**—Some people pride themselves on their knowledge of the marketplace. They may love to haggle and bargain, and even view this process as a sport.

- **Group pressure**—We shop differently when we're part of a group. For example, people who shop with at least one other person tend to make more unplanned purchases, buy more, and cover more areas of a store than do those who browse solo.[33] The famous Tupperware party is a successful example of a **home shopping party** that capitalizes on group pressures to boost sales.[34]

E-Commerce: Clicks versus Bricks

Pssst . . . want to hear a secret? People are buying a lot of stuff online these days. Oh, you knew that already. About 1.66 billion people worldwide purchase from online vendors, and they bought $2.3 trillion worth of goodies. Increasingly, those transactions occur on a mobile device—especially in the Asia Pacific region where 46% of online buyers used a phone as compared to 28% in North America (still a pretty hefty proportion).[35]

The experience of acquiring a product or service may be quite different offline versus online. This aspect of the transaction provides value over and above what you actually buy. We clearly see this difference between the two worlds when we compare how people gamble in casinos versus online. When researchers interviewed 30 gamblers to explore these experiences, they found sharp contrasts. Those who enjoy casino gambling have a strong sense of connection to fellow gamblers, so it's very much a social experience. Online gamblers enjoy the anonymity of the internet. Casino gamblers get turned on by the sensual experiences and excitement of the casino, whereas online gamblers gravitate more to the feeling of safety and control they get because they stay at home. Casino gamblers talked about the friendly atmosphere, whereas those who stayed online reported behaviors that a real casino wouldn't tolerate, such as taunts and bullying.[36] Although both groups aim to have fun and hope to make money, it's a safe bet that their experiences are quite different.

From Bricks to Clicks

As more and more websites pop up to sell everything from refrigerator magnets to Mack trucks, marketers continue to debate how the online world affects their business. In particular, many lose sleep as they wonder whether e-commerce will replace



Home shopping parties capitalize on group pressure to generate sales.
Source: Madhourse/Shutterstock.

traditional retailing, work in concert with it, or perhaps even fade away to become another fad your kids will laugh about someday (okay, that's not real likely). Still, the rising availability of comparison shopping phone apps does threaten the existence of many retailers as consumers engage in what they call **showrooming**. This means that a shopper visits a store like Best Buy to explore options for big-ticket items like TVs or appliances and then he or she finds a cheaper price for the specific model online.

Social shopping is an emerging form of e-commerce that allows an online shopper to simulate the experience of shopping with others in a bricks-and-mortar store. New technologies allow a consumer to "try on" a garment via an avatar and also to access feedback from others in his or her social network either prior to or after deciding on a purchase.[37] As the technology continues to mature, social shopping may offer an even more compelling purchase experience than the in-store interactions it replaces. The social shopping mechanisms now being introduced at a rapid rate take the form of product ratings, reviews, product montages, design competitions, style advice, live outfit reviews, visual scrapbooking, and crowd-sourced advice. Table 10.2 summarizes some of the current approaches to social shopping.

Marketing Opportunity

As we roll our carts through the grocery store, it's easy to toss in all kinds of tempting goodies that are high on taste appeal but low on nutritional value. How can we encourage shoppers to load up on kale instead of Cap'n Crunch? A recent study suggests that encouraging online food shopping may be one answer: Consumers chose relatively fewer food "vices" when they purchased online rather than in the store. Apparently this is because the digital format shows only symbolic versions of products (e.g., a package photo), while bricks-and-mortar stores allow people to see and touch the physical products. The more symbolic presentation mode decreases the products' vividness, which in turn diminishes consumers' desire to seek instant gratification and ultimately leads them to purchase fewer vices.[39]

From Clicks Back to Bricks

The obituary for bricks-and-mortar shopping appears to have been premature. Ironically, we're seeing a big trend now where **pure play** businesses (i.e., those that only operate online) are investing in the types of physical stores they threatened to make obsolete. Amazon, the "800-pound gorilla" of online shopping, spent $14 billion to buy Whole Foods as it took over nearly 500 locations. Rent The Runway, Bonobos, Birchbox, and Warby Parker are piling on as they open their own stores. So, even as venerable offline power houses like Toys "R" Us and Sears declare bankruptcy due to deteriorating sales and large debt obligations, and others, including Macy's and J. C. Penney close huge numbers of stores, these new, leaner companies may step in to pick up some of the slack. As a result, many shopping centers need to morph into playgrounds for hip young shoppers, who still will patronize a mall if it offers amenities such as restaurants, fitness centers, and storefronts for these pure play operators.[38]

TABLE 10.2 Social Shopping Applications

Social Shopping Website Categories						
Virtual Wish Lists/ Scrapbooking	Try It On Sites and Apps	Pre-purchase Feedback	Competitions	Social Shopping Advocacy	Group Purchasing Sites	Linking and Networking "Sign On"
Supply	Gotryiton	ASOS	ASOS	Klout	Living Social	Facebook Connect
Polyvore	Fashionism	Facebook		The Fancy	Groupon	Modcloth
Pinterest	Justboughtit	Twitter		Sneakpeeq	BuyWithMe	Wanelo
vi.sualize.us		Motilo		Fab		
Mydeco		Daily Grommet				

Source: Data from Rachel Ashman, Michael R. Solomon, and Julia Wolny, "An Old Model for a New Age: Applying the EKB in Today's Participatory Culture," *Journal of Customer Behaviour* 14, no. 2 (2015): 127–146.

Digital Currency

Is cash obsolete? In the past few years we've seen a firestorm of activity to promote various kinds of virtual currency and encourage consumers to switch from cash and credit cards to **digital wallets**, which are electronic devices that allow an individual to make e-commerce transactions. A lot of this activity is propelled by the spread of **near field communications (NFC) technology** that allows devices near to one another (like a smartphone and an NFC terminal in a store) to establish radio communication. In addition, **P2P (peer to peer) payment systems** such as Google Pay Send, PayPal, and Venmo empower ordinary citizens to transact business with one another—this is a corner of the sharing economy that allows consumers to give and receive payments for products and services such as one-of-a kind jewelry on Etsy or rides home from the bar on Uber.

The controversial **Bitcoin** system uses peer-to-peer technology to operate with no central authority or banks; it's the most prominent form of **cryptocurrency** that relies upon a revolutionary encryption technique called the **blockchain** rather than banks to regulate the generation of units of currency and verify the transfer of funds. This refers to the idea that cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin aren't saved in a file that can be hacked. A blockchain is like a global spreadsheet that uses a large and spread-out network to verify transactions.

This is not a trivial feature—it means that the data are transparent to the public but also that there is no single institution responsible for keeping financial records. Because the information is distributed across the internet, a single company, bank, or even government has no control over what goes on. Every 10 minutes, the system verifies and stores transactions in a block that is linked to the preceding block, which creates a chain. Each block must refer to the preceding block to be valid.

This structure permanently time-stamps and stores exchanges of value, which prevents anyone from altering the ledger. Like the World Wide Web of information, it's the World Wide Ledger of value—a distributed ledger that everyone can download and run on their personal computer. Some big companies including Dell, Expedia, PayPal, and Microsoft already work with partners to process bitcoin payments.[40] Don't unload those benjamins in your wallet just yet, but get ready for the currency revolution.

For marketers, the growth of online commerce is a sword that cuts both ways. On the one hand, they reach customers around the world even if they're physically located 100 miles from nowhere. On the other hand, they now compete not only with the store across the street but also with thousands of websites that span the globe. Also, when consumers obtain products directly from the manufacturer or wholesaler, this eliminates the intermediary—the loyal, store-based retailers that carry the firm's products and sell them at a marked-up price.[41] In addition, as we discussed in Chapter 2, there are huge issues relating to data security and privacy yet to be resolved.

So what makes e-commerce sites successful? Some e-tailers take advantage of technology to provide extra value to their customers that their land-locked rivals can't. eBay offers a feature within its Fashion app called "See It On" that allows the user to virtually try on sunglasses in real time. He or she can adjust the fit; choose different styles, frames, lenses, and colors to find the perfect look; and then browse through eBay to find the perfect price.[42] Other fashion sites, such as Net-a-Porter and Gilt Groupe, directly connect buyers and sellers so that designers can be more nimble and react quickly to changing consumer tastes. Indeed, the high-fashion site ModaOperandi bills itself as a **pretailer**; it provides exclusive styles by prodding manufacturers to produce runway pieces they wouldn't otherwise make because store buyers weren't sure anyone would pay the money for them.[43]

More generally, online shoppers value these aspects of a website:

- The ability to click on an item to create a pop-up window with more details about the product, including price, size, colors, and inventory availability.
- The ability to click on an item and add it to your cart without leaving the page you're on.
- The ability to "feel" merchandise through better imagery, more product descriptions, and details.
- The ability to enter all data related to your purchase on one page, rather than going through several checkout pages.
- The ability to mix and match product images on one page to determine whether they look good together.[44]

Retailing As Theater

Disney is revamping its stores to re-imagine the "magic" of the customer experience. It's not just about 50 varieties of mouse ears; they now carry curated collections by Coach, David Lerner, and Ethan Allen furniture. The stores now offer interactive experiences so shoppers can battle Darth Vader on a big screen and even purchase cotton candy and the iconic mouse ears from carts that are the same as those they'll see in Disneyland and Disney World. They can watch live streams from the actual theme parks and celebrate birthdays and other events while they shop.[45]

Disney knows it's all about theater. The competition for customers becomes even more intense as nonstore alternatives, from websites and print catalogs to TV shopping networks and home shopping parties, continue to multiply. With all of these shopping alternatives available, how can a traditional store compete? Many malls are giant entertainment centers, almost to the point that their traditional retail occupants seem like an afterthought. Today, it's commonplace to find carousels, miniature golf, skating rinks, or batting cages in a suburban mall. Hershey opened a make-believe factory smack in the middle of Times Square. It features four steam machines and 380 feet of neon lighting, plus a moving message board that lets visiting chocoholics program messages to surprise their loved ones.[46]

The quest to entertain means that many stores go all out to create imaginative environments that transport shoppers to fantasy worlds or provide other kinds of stimulation. We call this strategy **retail theming**. Innovative merchants today use four basic kinds of theming techniques:

1. Landscape themes rely on associations with images of nature, Earth, animals, and the physical body. Bass Pro Shops, for example, creates a simulated outdoor environment, including pools stocked with fish.
2. Marketscape themes build on associations with manufactured places. An example is The Venetian hotel in Las Vegas, which lavishly recreates parts of the real Italian city.
3. Cyberspace themes build on images of information and communications technology. eBay's retail interface instills a sense of community among its vendors and traders.
4. Mindscape themes draw on abstract ideas and concepts, introspection and fantasy, and often possess spiritual overtones. The Kiva day spa in downtown Chicago offers health treatments based on a theme of American Indian healing ceremonies and religious practices.[47]

Marketing Opportunity

One popular theming strategy is to convert a store into a **being space**. This kind of environment resembles a sort of commercial living room, where we can go to relax, be entertained, hang out with friends, escape the everyday, or even learn. When you think of being spaces, Starbucks probably comes to mind. The coffee chain's stated goal is to become our "third place" where we spend the bulk of our time, in addition to home and work. Starbucks led the way when it outfitted its stores with comfy chairs and Wi-Fi. Reflecting the ever-quickening pace of our culture, many of these being spaces come and go rapidly—on purpose. **Pop-up stores** appear in many forms around the world. Typically, these are temporary installations that do business for only a few days or weeks and then disappear before they get old. For example, the Swatch Instant Store sells limited-edition watches in a major city until the masses discover it; then it closes and moves on to another "cool" locale. The Dutch beer brand Dommelsch organized pop-up concerts: Fans entered barcodes found on cans, beer bottles, and coasters on the brewer's website to discover dates and locations. You may even run into a pop-up store on your campus; several brands, including the Brazilian flip-flop maker Havaianas, Victoria's Secret's Pink, and sustainable-clothing brand RVL7, run pop-up projects around the United States.[48]

Store Image

As so many stores compete for customers, how do we ever pick one over others? Just like products (see Chapter 7), stores have "personalities." Some shops have clearly defined images (either good or bad). Others tend to blend into the crowd. What factors shape this personality, or **store image**? Some of the important dimensions of a store's image are location, merchandise, suitability, and the knowledge and congeniality of the sales staff.

These design features typically work together to create an overall impression. When we think about stores, we don't usually say, "Well, that place is fairly good in terms of convenience, the salespeople are acceptable, and services are good." We're more likely to proclaim, "That place gives me the creeps," or "It's so much fun to shop there." We quickly get an overall impression of a store, and the feeling we get may have more to do with intangibles, such as interior design and the types of people we find in the aisles, than with the store's return policies or credit availability. As a result, some stores routinely pop up in our consideration sets (see Chapter 9), whereas we never consider others ("Only geeks shop there!").[49]

Atmospherics

Retailers want you to come in—and stay. Careful store design increases the amount of space the shopper covers, and stimulating displays keep them in the aisles longer. This "curb appeal" translates directly to the bottom line: Researchers tracked grocery shopper's movements by plotting the position of their cell phones as they moved about a store. They found that when people lingered just 1 percent longer, sales rose by 1.3 percent.

Of course, grocers know a lot of tricks after years of observing shoppers. For example, they call the area just inside a supermarket's entrance the "decompression zone": People tend to slow down and take stock of their surroundings when they enter the store, so store designers use this space to promote bargains rather than to sell. Similarly, Walmart's "greeters" help customers to settle into their shopping experience. Once they get a serious start, the first thing shoppers encounter is the produce section. Fruits and vegetables can easily be damaged, so it would be more



Bass Pro Shops use a landscape theme to connect shoppers with nature.
Source: Stuart Abraham/Alamy Stock Photo.

logical to buy these items at the end of a shopping trip. But fresh, wholesome food makes people feel good (and righteous) so they're less guilty when they throw the chips and cookies in the cart later.[50]

Because marketers recognize that a store's image is an important part of the retailing mix, store designers pay a lot of attention to **atmospherics**, the "conscious designing of space and its various dimensions to evoke certain effects in buyers."[51] These dimensions include colors, scents, and sounds. For example, stores with red interiors tend to make people tense, whereas a blue decor imparts a calmer feeling.[52]

A store's atmosphere in turn affects what we buy. In one study, researchers asked shoppers how much pleasure they felt five minutes after they entered a store. Those who enjoyed their experience spent more time and money.[53] To boost the entertainment value of shopping (and to lure online shoppers back to bricks-and-mortar stores), some retailers create **activity stores** that let consumers participate in the production of the products or services they buy there. One familiar example is the Build-A-Bear Workshop chain, where customers dress bear bodies in costumes.[54]

In addition to visual stimuli, all sorts of sensory cues influence us in retail settings.[55] For example, patrons of country-and-western bars drink more when the jukebox music is slower. According to a researcher, "Hard drinkers prefer listening to slower-paced, wailing, lonesome, self-pitying music."[56] Music also can affect eating habits. Another study found that diners who listened to loud, fast music ate more food. In contrast, those who listened to Mozart or Brahms ate less and more slowly. The researchers concluded that diners who choose soothing music at mealtimes can increase weight loss by at least five pounds a month![57]

In-Store Decision Making

Despite all their efforts to "pre-sell" consumers through advertising, marketers increasingly recognize that the store environment exerts a strong influence on many purchases. Women tell researchers, for example, that store displays are one of the major information sources they use to decide what clothing to buy.[58]

This influence is even stronger when we shop for food: Analysts estimate that shoppers decide on about two out of every three supermarket purchases while they walk through the aisles.[59] Research evidence indicates that consumers use *mental budgets* for grocery trips that are typically composed of both an itemized portion and *in-store slack*. This means they typically decide beforehand on an amount they plan to spend, but then they have an additional amount in mind (slack) they are willing to spend on unplanned purchases—if they come across any they really want to have.[60] Here are some "tricks of the trade":

- Sell sweets at eye level, midway along aisles, where shoppers' attention lingers longest.
- Use the ends of aisles to generate big revenues—endcap displays account for 45 percent of soft drink sales.
- Use freestanding displays toward the rear of the supermarket and on the left side of aisles. Shoppers tend to move through a store in a counterclockwise direction and they are more likely to choose items from shelves to their left.
- Sprinkle the same product throughout the store, rather than grouping it in one spot to boost sales through repetitive exposure.
- Group ingredients for a meal in one spot.
- Post health-related information on kiosks and shelf tags to link groceries to good health in shoppers' minds, even though only 23 percent of them say they always look for nutritional information on labels.[61]

Shopping Apps and In-Store Tech

The global app economy is expected to hit $6.3 trillion by 2021. Already, Americans spend about 2 hours and 15 minutes per day (yes, day) on apps, which adds up to more than a month per year![62] **Mobile shopping apps** on smartphones provide imaginative new ways for retailers to guide shoppers through the experience, as they do everything for you: locate merchandise, identify the nearest restroom in a mall, or scout out sales. Some help you remember where you parked your car; others actually provide reward points when you visit certain stores. The apps also promise to provide a solution to the major hassles that drive consumers away from bricks-and-mortar stores, especially long checkout times and incompetent sales associates. One survey reported that nearly three in 10 store visits ended with an average of $132 unspent because shoppers gave up in frustration and abandoned their carts. The study also found that more than 40 percent of shoppers who received guidance from a retail associate armed with a handheld mobile computer reported an improved shopping experience. To rub salt into the wound, more than half of store employees agreed that because use of online shopping tools is escalating, their customers were more knowledgeable about their products than the salespeople are! More than one-third of U.S. shoppers have downloaded at least one food or beverage app.[63]

In addition, major retailers like Macy's and Target deploy **beacons** in their stores. These devices communicate with smartphone apps indoors through a Bluetooth signal. They can share a coupon with a shopper's phone as he or she browses in the aisles, or reward consumers with points even for just entering the store. And, the augmented reality (AR) and **virtual reality** (VR) platforms we've already discussed promise to turn the shopping experience into an interactive playground. AR apps allow the shopper to access additional information from product packages. For example, a woman who buys a Maybelline cosmetic product could hold her phone over the box to bring up a model who shares tips about how to apply makeup. Headsets like the Oculus Rift can provide a totally immersive experience as shoppers can browse a three-dimensional "store" just by putting one on. Schick launched a VR roller-coaster ride along a yellow lubrication strip, which weaves around a man shaving before diving into his bristles to showcase the new product's ability to give a smooth, close shave.[64] The future is here!

Spontaneous Shopping

When a shopper suddenly decides to buy something in the store, one of two different processes explains why:

1. He or she engages in **unplanned buying** when he or she is unfamiliar with a store's layout or perhaps he or she is under some time pressure. Or, if a person sees an item on a store shelf, this might be a reminder that he or she needs it. About one-third of all unplanned buying occurs because a shopper recognizes a new need while in the store.[65]
2. He or she engages in **impulse buying** when he or she experiences a sudden, unresistable urge, like the sketch of a "typical" impulse purchaser an actual consumer drew in Figure 10.4.[66]

Retailers typically place so-called *impulse items*, such as candy and gum, near the checkout to cater to these urges. Similarly, many supermarkets install wider aisles to encourage browsing, and the widest tend to feature products with the highest profit margins. They stack low mark-up items that shoppers purchase regularly in narrower aisles to allow shopping carts to speed through. Starbucks encourages

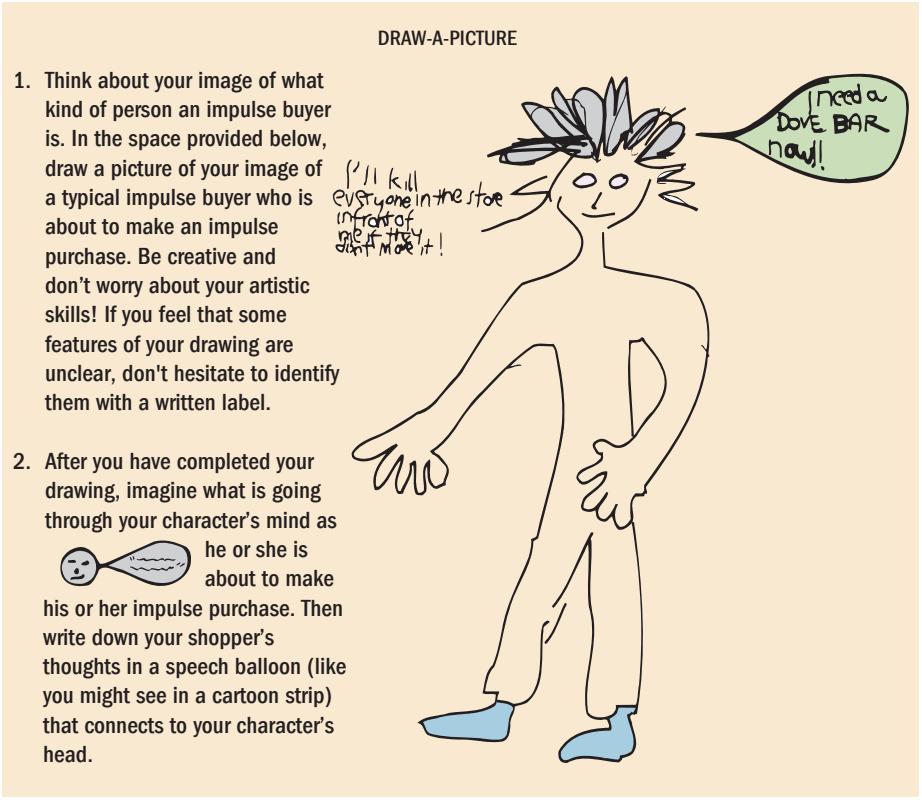


Figure 10.4 ONE CONSUMER'S IMAGE OF AN IMPULSE BUYER

Source: Dennis Rock, "Is Impulse Buying (Yet) a Useful Marketing Concept?" (unpublished manuscript, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1990): Fig. 7-A.

impulse purchasing when it charges customers who want to download songs they hear over the store's speakers directly onto their iPhones.[67] Each week the Dollar Tree chain designates an impulse item like a pen or candy bar as "drive items" that cashiers push at checkout. As the company's CEO explained, "It's just that one last chance to get another item in their shopping bag."[68]

Point-of-Purchase Stimuli

Well-designed in-store display boosts impulse purchases by as much as 10 percent. That explains why U.S. companies spend about $19 billion each year on **point-of-purchase (POP) stimuli**.[69] A POP can be an elaborate product display or demonstration, a coupon-dispensing machine, or an employee who gives out free samples of a new cookie in the grocery aisle.

The importance of POP in shopper decision-making explains why product packages increasingly play a key role in the marketing mix as they evolve from the functional to the fantastic:

- In the past 100 years, Pepsi changed the look of its can, and before that its bottles, only 10 times. Now the company switches designs every few weeks. It's also testing cans that spray an aroma when you open one to match the flavor of the drink, such as a wild cherry scent misting from a Wild Cherry Pepsi can.
- Coors Light bottles sport labels that turn blue when the beer is chilled to the right temperature.
- Huggies' Henry the Hippo hand soap bottles have a light that flashes for 20 seconds to show children how long they should wash their hands.

The Salesperson: A Lead Role in the Play

The salesperson is one of the most important players in the retailing drama.[70] As we saw way back in Chapter 1, exchange theory stresses that every interaction involves a trade of value. Each participant gives something to the other and hopes to receive something in return.[71] A (competent) salesperson offers a lot of value because his or her expert advice makes the shopper's choice easier.

A buyer–seller situation is like many other **dyadic encounters** (two-person groups); it's a relationship in which both parties must reach some agreement about the roles of each participant during a process of **identity negotiation**.[72] Some of the factors that help to define a salesperson's role (and effectiveness) are his or her age, appearance, educational level, and motivation to sell.[73]

In addition, more effective salespersons usually know their customers' traits and preferences better than do ineffective salespersons, and they adapt their approach to meet the needs of each specific customer.[75] The ability to be adaptable is especially vital when customers and salespeople have different *interaction styles*.[76] We each vary in the degree of assertiveness we bring to interactions. At one extreme, *nonassertive* people believe it's not socially acceptable to complain, and sales situations may intimidate them. *Assertive* people are more likely to stand up for themselves in a firm but nonthreatening way. *Aggressives* may resort to rudeness and threats if they don't get their way (we've all run into these folks).[77]

The Tangled Web

Restaurant and store workers who have to grin and bear it all day go to vent on the customerssuck.com website. Once off the clock, they share their frustrations about the idiocy, slovenliness, and insensitivity of their customers. Some contributors to the website share stupid questions their customers ask, such as "How much is a 99-cent cheeseburger?" whereas others complain about working conditions and having to be nice to not-so-nice people. The slogan of the site is "the customer is never right."[74]

OBJECTIVE 10-3
The growth of a "sharing economy" changes how many consumers think about buying rather than renting products.

Ownership and the Sharing Economy

A funny thing is happening when people buy products: They no longer want to buy them. Instead we're witnessing the rise of the **sharing economy**, or what is sometimes called **collaborative consumption**. In this business model people rent what they need rather than buying it. Collaborative consumption communities typically offer a website that allows individuals to list their services and a ratings system that allows both buyers and sellers to rate their experiences. Folks, this movement is huge: A recent major survey reported that 44% of U.S. adults (more than 90 million people) have participated in the sharing economy, playing the roles of lenders and borrowers, drivers and riders, hosts and guests. And, another survey found that 22% of American adults, or 45 million people, have already offered some kind of good or service in this economy.[78] One in 10 online shoppers has rented a product online in the last year, and shoppers ages 18 to 36 are three times more likely to have rented a product online than older people. They gravitate toward platforms like Omni, that give users a way to rent out their stuff such as such as suitcases and sporting equipment that would otherwise sit unused in their garages.[79]

Need to use a car? Go to Zipcar and rent one by the hour. How about a camera, a power drill, or a blender? Go to SnapGoods and rent one of those too. Park your pet with a dogsitter rather than an impersonal kennel at Dog Vacay. You can even get a low interest loan from other individuals at Lending Club. The sharing economy is revolutionizing industries including taxis (Uber and Lyft), hospitality (Airbnb), used books (Bookmooch), and even errand running (TaskRabbit).

What is fueling this revolution? It's primarily due to the technology that dramatically lowers transaction costs, so that it's much easier to share assets and track them



As a major player in the sharing economy, Zipcar is changing how many urban dwellers think about transportation.
Source: Islemount Images/Alamy Stock Photo.

across large numbers of people. Online payment systems make it easy to exchange money. Social networks create communities and build trust among strangers who can access each other's histories. Sellers can make money from assets they don't use much; think about how many hours a typical owner actually uses an electric drill compared to how much it costs to buy one. Many of us only use our cars a few hours per week, but we still pay a monthly loan, maintenance, parking fees, and so on; car owners who use RelayRides to rent their vehicles on average make $250 a month and some make more than $1,000.

However, it's not just ease of use that explains the rise of the sharing economy. We also can point to a change in attitudes toward ownership, especially among younger consumers. A global survey that talked to more than 10,000 respondents reported that one-third of millennials already belong to a sharing service or expect to join one soon. Many people believe overconsumption is putting our planet at risk, and half say they could happily live without most of the items they own. This is consistent with discussions we've had in prior chapters about the weak relationship researchers find between owning more "stuff" and happiness.[80] In addition, many people appreciate the intimacy of exchanging items with "real people" rather than getting them from big companies. Many seem more than willing to do things with total strangers our mothers used to warn us against: They stay in their homes, get in their cars, and even wear their clothes.[81] That's one reason the notion of doing business with other consumers rather than with companies goes by the name **P2P commerce** (peer-to-peer).

OBJECTIVE 10-4
Our decisions about how to dispose of a product are as important as how we decide to obtain it in the first place.

Postpurchase Satisfaction and Disposal

Our overall reactions to a product after we've bought it—what researchers call **consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction (CS/D)**—obviously play a big role in our future behavior. It's a lot easier to sell something once than

to sell it again if it bombed the first time. We evaluate the things we buy as we use them and integrate them into our daily consumption activities.[82]

Postpurchase Satisfaction

What exactly do consumers look for in products? That's easy: They want quality and value.[83] However, these terms have slippery meanings that are hard for us to pin down. We infer quality when we rely on cues as diverse as brand name, price, product warranties, and even our estimate of how much money a company invests in its advertising.[84]

Satisfaction or dissatisfaction is more than a reaction to how well a product or service performs. According to the **expectancy disconfirmation model**, we form beliefs about product performance based on our prior experience with the product or communications about the product that imply a certain level of quality.[85] When something performs the way we thought it would, we may not think much about it. If it fails to live up to expectations, this may create negative feelings. However, if performance happens to exceed our expectations, we're happy campers.

This perspective underscores how important it is to manage expectations. We often trace a customer's dissatisfaction to his or her erroneous expectations of the company's ability to deliver a product or service. *No* company is perfect. It's just not realistic to think that everything will always turn out perfectly (although some firms don't even come close!). For a while the hotel chain Holiday Inn adopted the slogan "No surprises" to assure guests of flawless service. Inevitably, there *were* surprises (no operator to answer the phone, an unmade bed) and the company had to drop its promise of perfection.

Product Disposal

Green issues don't end at the cash register. There is also the matter of what we do with our things when we're done with them. **Product disposal** is also an important element of consumer behavior.

In the week after Christmas alone, American consumers return almost 10% of the gifts they bought online. The Postal Service even labels January 5 National



These watches are made from recycled Nespresso coffeemaker cartridges.
Source: Courtesy of Blancier Handmade Watches.

Returns Day. Returns generate over four billion pounds of landfill waste each year. That's because, believe it or not, it's more economical for many returns to get trashed instead of being returned to store inventories.[86]

Because we do form strong attachments to some products, it can be painful to get rid of them. Our possessions anchor our identities; our past lives on in our things.[87] Some Japanese people ritually "retire" worn-out sewing needles, chopsticks, and even computer chips when they burn them in a ceremony to thank them for years of good service.[88] And here in the United States, recent research shows that when an everyday product—even something as mundane as cups or aluminum cans—is linked to a consumer's identity, it is less likely to be trashed and more likely to be recycled. For example, a person who is a big Coca-Cola fan is more likely to recycle a Coke can than a Pepsi can.[89]

Still, we all have to get rid of our "stuff" at some point, either because it has served its purpose or perhaps because it no longer fits with our view of ourselves (as when newlyweds "upgrade" to a real place). Concern about the environment, coupled with a need for convenience, makes ease of product disposal a key attribute in categories from razors to diapers.

In many cases we acquire a new product even though the old one still functions—that's one of the hallmarks of our materialistic society. Some reasons to



Food waste winds up in landfills where it decomposes and emits methane, a potent greenhouse gas.
Source: Zavalnyuk Sergey/123RF.

replace an item include a desire for new features, a change in the individual's environment (e.g., a refrigerator is the wrong color for a freshly painted kitchen), or a change in the person's role or self-image.[90]

Recycling and the Underground Economy

The issue of product disposition is vital because of its enormous public policy implications. We live in a throwaway society, which creates problems for the environment and also results in a great deal of unfortunate waste. In the United States alone, we waste about 60 million metric tons of food a year with an estimated value of $162 billion. Indeed, analysts say that one-third of the food produced globally is never consumed! To make matters worse, most food waste winds up in landfills where it decomposes and emits methane, a potent greenhouse gas.[91]

How do people decide whether to discard products or recycle them? Because we discard two billions tons of trash per year (and more in the United States than any other country), this is a pretty important question. One study reported that the perceived effort involved in recycling was the best predictor of whether people would go to the trouble. This pragmatic dimension outweighed general attitudes toward recycling and the environment in predicting one's intention to recycle.[92] Of course, one way to ease the pain is to reward consumers for recycling. The H&M chain sponsors a Garment Recycling Program; customers can bring any garment from any brand in any condition into an H&M store. For every bag of clothes donated, H&M gives customers a 15 percent discount on the next item they buy.[93]

During **lateral cycling**, one consumer exchanges something he or she owns for something the other person owns. Reusing other people's things is especially important in our throwaway society because, as one researcher put it, "there is no longer an 'away' to throw things to."[94] Although traditional marketers don't pay much attention to used-product sellers, factors such as concern about the environment, demands for quality, and cost and fashion consciousness make these "secondary" markets more important.[95]



Product disposal is a major issue for used electronic items.
Source: Electronic Products Recycling Association (EPRA).



The underground economy in the form of flea markets and other used-product sales formats is a significant element in the U.S. market.
Source: Stephanie Keith/Polaris/Newscom

In fact, economic estimates of this **underground economy** range from 3 to 30 percent of the gross national product of the United States and up to 70 percent of the gross domestic product of other countries. In the United States alone, there are more than 3,500 flea markets—including at least a dozen huge operations such as the 60-acre Orange County Marketplace in California—that operate nationwide to produce upward of $10 billion in gross sales.[96]

The new trend of *recommerce* (a play on the term *e-commerce*) shows that many consumers want to squeeze more value out of their possessions by selling or trading them.[97] This focus has given birth to the **swishing** movement, where people organize parties to exchange clothing or other personal possessions with others.[98]

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. **Many factors at the time of purchase dramatically influence the consumer's decision-making process.**

   Many factors affect a purchase. These include the consumer's antecedent state (e.g., his or her mood, time pressure, or disposition toward shopping). Time is an important resource that often determines how much effort and search will go into a decision. Our moods are influenced by the degree of pleasure and arousal a store environment creates.

   The usage context of a product is a segmentation variable; consumers look for different product attributes depending on the use to which they intend to put their purchase. The presence or absence of other people (co-consumers)—and the types of people they are—can also affect a consumer's decisions. The shopping experience also is a pivotal part of the purchase

decision. In many cases, retailing is like theater: The consumer's evaluation of stores and products may depend on the type of "performance" he witnesses. The actors (e.g., salespeople), the setting (the store environment), and the props (e.g., store displays) influence this evaluation. Like a brand personality, a number of factors, such as perceived convenience, sophistication, and expertise of salespeople, determine store image. With increasing competition from nonstore alternatives, creating a positive shopping experience has never been more important. Online shopping is growing in importance, and this new way to acquire products has both good (e.g., convenience) and bad (e.g., security) aspects.

2. **The information a store's layout, website, or salespeople provides strongly influences a purchase decision.**

   Because we don't make many purchase decisions until we're actually in the store, point-of-purchase (POP) stimuli are important sales tools. These include product samples, elaborate package displays, place-based media, and in-store promotional materials such as "shelf talkers." POP stimuli are particularly useful in promoting impulse buying, which happens when a consumer yields to a sudden urge for a product. Increasingly, mobile shopping apps are also playing a key role. The consumer's encounter with a salesperson is a complex and important process. The outcome can be affected by such factors as the salesperson's similarity to the customer and his or her perceived credibility.

3. **The growth of a "sharing economy" changes how many consumers think about buying rather than renting products.**

   In the rapidly growing sharing economy people rent what they need rather than buy it. New technologies make this process much easier and online networks allow us to form bonds of trust with strangers. In addition, many consumers no longer place a premium on owning products and prefer to "borrow" them only for the specific times when they actually need them.

4. **Our decisions about how to dispose of a product are as important as how we decide to obtain it in the first place.**

   Concern about the environment and waste make the issue of product disposal key in many categories. In addition to understanding if and how consumers recycle, newer recommerce models such as swishing are emerging that enable people to share more of their used goods with one another rather than disposing of them.

KEY TERMS

Activity stores, 368
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REVIEW

10-1 What is time poverty, and how can it influence our purchase decisions?

10-2 What are the two dimensions that determine whether we will react positively or negatively to a purchase environment?

10-3 List three separate motivations for shopping, and give an example of each.

10-4 What are some important pros and cons of e-commerce?

10-5 List three factors that help to determine store image.

10-6 What is the difference between unplanned buying and impulse buying?

10-7 How do business models in the sharing economy differ from traditional purchase processes?

10-8 What is the difference between recycling and lateral cycling?

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

10-9 Are pop-up stores simply a fad, or a retailing concept that's here to stay?

10-10 Think about exceptionally good and bad salespeople you have encountered as a shopper. What qualities seem to differentiate them from others?

10-11 Discuss the concept of *timestyle*. Based on your own experiences, how might we segment consumers in terms of their timestyles?

10-12 Consumers who participate in the sharing economy seem willing to interact with total strangers. Despite safety and privacy concerns, what is the long-term outlook for this change in the way we think about interacting with people whom we don't know? How can businesses help to diminish worries some people may have about these practices?

10-13 Several men's clothing retailers nationwide now provide free booze to their male clientele to encourage them to hang out in their stores.[99] Is it ethical to encourage customers to get wasted before they shop?

10-14 Some retailers work hard to cultivate a certain look or image, and they may even choose employees who fit this look. Abercrombie & Fitch, for example, seems to link itself to a clean-cut, all-American image. At one point a lawsuit claimed that Abercrombie & Fitch systematically "refuses to hire qualified minority applicants as brand representatives to work on the sales floor and discourages applications from minority applicants" (Abercrombie replied that it has "zero tolerance for discrimination").[100] We know that the Hooters restaurant chain is notorious for its attractive female waitresses. Should a retailer have the right to recruit employees who are consistent with its image even if this means excluding certain types of people (e.g., non-Caucasians, men) from the sales floor? What are some positive and negative aspects of a policy that requires employees who interact with customers to wear a uniform?

10-15 The store environment is heating up as more and more companies put their promotional dollars into point-of-purchase efforts. Some stores confront shoppers with videos at the checkout counter, computer monitors attached to their shopping carts, and ads stenciled on the floors. We're also increasingly exposed to ads in nonshopping environments. For example, a health club in New York was forced to remove TV monitors that showed advertising on the Health Club Media Networks after exercisers claimed that the programming interfered with their workouts. Do you feel that these innovations are overly intrusive? At what point might shoppers rebel and demand some peace and quiet when they shop? Do you see any market potential in the future for stores that "countermarket" by promising a "hands-off" shopping environment?

10-16 Courts often prohibit special-interest groups from distributing literature in shopping malls. Mall managements claim that these centers are private property. However, these groups argue that the mall is the modern-day version of the town square and as such is a public forum. Find some recent court cases involving this free-speech issue, and examine the arguments pro and con. What is the current status of the mall as a public forum? Do you agree with this concept?

10-17 Marketers use "tricks" to minimize psychological waiting time. These techniques range from altering customers' perceptions of a line's length to providing distractions that divert attention from waiting:[101]

One hotel chain received excessive complaints about the wait for elevators, so it installed mirrors near the elevator banks. People's natural tendency to check their appearance reduced complaints, even though the actual waiting time was unchanged.

Airline passengers often complain about the wait to claim their baggage. In one airport, passengers would walk 1 minute from the plane to the baggage carousel and then wait 7 minutes for their luggage. When the airport changed the layout so that the walk to the carousel took 6 minutes and bags arrived 2 minutes after that, complaints disappeared.[102]

Restaurant chains are scrambling to put the "fast" back into fast food, especially for drive-through lanes, which now account for 65 percent of revenues. In a study that ranked the speed of 25 fast-food chains, cars spent an average of 203.6 seconds from the menu board to departure. Wendy's was clocked the fastest at 150.3 seconds. To speed things up and eliminate spills, McDonald's created a salad that comes in a container to fit into car cup holders. Arby's is working on a "high viscosity" version of its special sauce that's less likely to spill. Burger King is testing see-through bags so customers can quickly check their orders before speeding off.[103]

What are your waiting line "pain points?" How can companies change their processes to make these situations easier or more enjoyable for you?

▶ APPLY

10-18 Conduct naturalistic observation at a local mall. Sit in a central location and observe the activities of mall employees and patrons. Keep a log of the non-retailing activity you observe (e.g., special performances, exhibits, socializing, and so on). Does this activity enhance or detract from business the mall conducts? As malls become more like high-tech game rooms, how valid is the criticism that shopping areas only encourage more loitering by teenage boys, who don't spend a lot in stores and simply scare away other customers?

10-19 Select three competing clothing stores in your area and conduct a store image study for them. Ask a group of consumers to rate each store on a set of attributes and plot these ratings on the same graph. Based on your findings, are there any areas of competitive advantage or disadvantage you could bring to the attention of store management?

10-20 Using Table 10.1 as a model, construct a person–situation segmentation matrix for a brand of perfume.

10-21 Many retailers believe that when they pile a lot of stuff around their store, this cluttered look encourages shoppers to hunt for items and eventually buy more. Dollar General recently raised the height of its shelves to more than 6 feet; JC Penney transformed empty walls into jewelry and accessory displays; Old Navy added lanes lined with items like water bottles, candy, and lunchboxes. Best Buy is even testing the impact of filling aisles with bulky items like Segways and bicycles to compensate for the smaller space that thin TVs and smaller speakers take up. Notably, Walmart recently did an abrupt about-face: The company only recently remodeled its stores by eliminating the pallets of items it used to stack in the centers of aisles, and it reduced overall inventory by about 9 percent. Customers loved the leaner, cleaner look. Only one problem: They bought less stuff. As a senior Walmart executive commented, "They loved the experience. They just bought less. And that generally is not a good long-term strategy." Now, Walmart is adding inventory back in and is once again piling stacks of merchandise in aisles.[104] What's your take on these store-stocking strategies? Visit several "big-box" stores in your area, such as Walmart, Target, Best Buy, Costco, and so on. If possible, interview shoppers about their experiences. Do they have trouble navigating around the store? Do they enjoy the clutter? Does it feel like a "treasure hunt" when they have to pick their way around piles and pallets? If you were designing a store, how would you craft a stocking strategy that would make it easy to shop there?

10-22 Identify three people who own electric coffeemakers. Then, "go to the gemba" by observing them as they actually prepare coffee in the appliance at home. Based on these experiences, what recommendations might you make to the designer of a new coffeemaker model that would improve customers' experiences with the product?

10-23 Interview three consumers who have used a sharing economy service, such as Zipcar, Airbnb, Snapgoods, and others. How would you characterize their experiences compared to more traditional models?

CASE STUDY

RH—Revolutionizing Physical Retailing

With consumers able to order virtually anything via the internet, traditional retailers must offer "something extra" to motivate shoppers to make the trip to their stores. High-end design retailer RH believes it has found the formula for getting people to not only visit, but also spend considerable time and money in its bricks-and-mortar stores.[105]

Stephen Gordon started Restoration Hardware (now RH) after restoring his own Victorian home into a bed and breakfast. After a frustrating but successful search for quality furnishings and accessories, he decided to make these items available to others fixing up historic homes.[106] He opened his first store in 1980; it offered hard-to-find and rather expensive items, many with a nostalgic appeal. One product based on Gordon's past was a replica of a chair his third-grade teacher had used![107]

Today, RH is a luxury brand that offers lighting, décor, home furnishings, bathware, and a variety of other products clearly targeted to an upper income clientele.[108] Visit one of its 83 galleries and you can pick up a nice taper-arm sofa for $12,000 or perhaps a crystal chandelier for only $5,000. You can also find its famous decorative drawer pulls, cashmere scarves, and even in the Baby and Child collection some plush toys.[109]

Creating a fun shopping experience was a goal of RH's founder from the beginning, leading to offerings such as Moon Pies, glass marbles, and the metal Slinky toy from the 1940s.[110] That entertaining shopping experience continues today with RH's current bricks-and-mortar strategy. Although the company is growing, RH has actually decreased its total number of stores, but "doubled down" on the remaining ones by renovating them into big, beautiful galleries located in renovated historical buildings. These 45,000-square-foot stores are filled with natural light, and include cafés where you can enjoy a latte or perhaps a Bellini cocktail while you decide just which Moroccan rug is right for you. Three of the locations even have wine vaults![111] No babysitter? No problem—child-care will also be provided.[112] In the new store design, the restaurants, bars, and other food services can amount to a third of the floorspace.

Although originally designed to enhance the shopping experience, the restaurants have turned out to be a good business venture on their own. The 3 Arts Club café in RH's Chicago gallery was recently the 7th most Instagrammed café in the country. In its first full year of operation, it exceeded $5 million in revenue and had a line forming around the block on weekends. Not bad for a restaurant with no exterior signage, a limited all day menu, and a location in the middle of a furniture store![113] It will be no surprise that RH is including restaurants in additional galleries. The West Palm Beach (Florida) gallery was testing a rooftop restaurant in 2018 that was on track to exceed $7M in sales.[114] What's next? In New York, RH is expanding its hospitality ventures with a 14-room luxury hotel that is scheduled to open in 2019.[115,116]

Restaurants, wine cellars, lattes—is this just another form of "retailtainment"? While RH's approach does help draw customers into its galleries and entertain them while they are there, the company's approach is more strategic than that. RH has a fundamentally different view of its retail spaces—not as stores, but rather as galleries or showrooms, where customers can get inspiration and style guidance.[117] Current CEO Gary Friedman's vision is to "reinvent physical retail" with a broader set of services and these elaborate new stores. RH's focus on the service experience is similar to that found in an Apple store, where customers can see, touch, and try out all the latest Apple products.[118] One retail consultant calls these new RH showrooms a kind of "giant 3D real-time catalog."[119] While customers are waiting for a table at the café or enjoying their dinner, Friedman hopes they'll get inspired to redecorate their home. Like the furniture in the restaurant? No problem—it's all for sale.[120]

The main motivation for retail strategies like RH's is to get consumers off the couch with their smartphones and into a physical store. While many traditional retailers are rushing to catch up in e-commerce, CEO Friedman insists that RH's business is "not about the internet."[121] RH differentiates through its extravagant physical retail spaces instead of a website, which is limited in its ability to communicate size and quality.[122] "Make no mistake," says Friedman, "many retailers find themselves in a race to the bottom, a race we at RH have chosen not to join." RH is running a different race, and based on its most recent annual revenues, it seems to be winning.[123]

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 10-1 In this chapter, you learned about some retailers that convert their whole store into a "being space." How does this concept apply to the RH strategy and how might it affect its sales?

CS 10-2 The RH strategy focuses on bricks-and-mortar stores over e-commerce. Do you agree with this strategy? While the strategy seems to be working, is RH taking a risk by deemphasizing e-commerce?

CS 10-3 What elements of RH's approach could be appropriate for retailers that are at price levels below the high/end prestige level of a retailer such as RH?

MyLab Marketing

If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

10-24 People have more leisure time than ever. Why do they feel so rushed, and how can marketers address this problem?

10-25 Is the customer always right? Why or why not?

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Section 3 Data Case

Cats, Kibble, and Cable TV

Background and Goal

You were hired by a small regional chain of boutique pet care stores. That focuses on serving dog and cat owners for all of their pet needs, including pet sitting, pet training, grooming, toys, and food the retail chain. tends to serve customers who consider their dogs and cats "surrogate children," and who are willing to spend top dollar on quality services and products.

The retail chain is preparing to launch its first television advertising campaign. The top management team has whittled the list of cable channels to potentially advertise on down to 11. Your task is to analyze additional information about the viewers of these 11 stations and come up with a short list of cable channels that you believe will be best for the retail chain. To aid you in your task, management handed you three reports generated from GfK MRI. The first report deals with the quantity of pets owned by viewers of each channel, the second report deals with the types of pet services used by channel viewers, and the final report is about where people buy their pet food.

The Data

The data in each of the three reports can be interpreted in a similar manner.

- The (mils) column is the estimated number (in millions) of people or U.S. households who exhibited the target behavior in the row and column. For example, 12.6 million U.S. adults report watching the cable channel AMC as well as owning one dog.
- The vertical percentage (%) column is the estimated percentage of all people in a column who watch the channel reported in the table's row. For example, of all people who own one dog, 19.1 percent of them also report watching AMC.
- The horizontal percentage (%) column is the estimated percentage of all people in a row who also exhibit the behavior reported in the table's column. For example, of all people who watch AMC, 29.2 percent of them own one dog.

These three pieces of information can be informative on their own. However, they can also be used to calculate other useful metrics.

Task 1: Understanding the Data

Use the information provided in Table 1 to answer the following questions:

1. If someone owns a dog, what is the percentage chance they watch Fox News? What if they own a cat?
2. Which channel is much more likely to be watched by someone with four or more dogs than an average American? What is the Index value for this channel? An Index value of 100 is the benchmark for an average U.S. adult to have four or more dogs.
3. Which channel is much less likely to be watched by someone with four or more cats than compared to an average American? What is the Index value?
4. If we wanted to reach the most two- to three-dog-owning households by advertising on only a single cable channel, which channel would we pick?
5. Based on these results, is it fair to say that Animal Planet watchers are more likely to own either a cat or dog compared to the national average?
6. Regardless of the number of dogs or cats someone owns (including zero!), about how many U.S. adults in total said they watch the Cooking Channel?

TABLE 1 Pet Ownership and Cable Channel Viewing

	1 dog			2–3 dogs			4+ dogs				1 cat			2–3 cats			4+ cats			
	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	Index	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	Index
Total	66.1	100.0	26.9	41.5	100.0	16.9	6.6	100.0	2.7	100.0	31.1	100.0	12.7	22.5	100	9.2	5.8	100	2.4	100
HH subscribes to Cable	29.0	43.9	26.1	16.7	40.2	15.0	2.1	31.9	1.9	71.0	13.6	43.6	12.2	8.9	44	8.9	2	35.3	1.8	78
AMC	12.6	19.1	29.2	7.9	19.0	18.3	1.3	18.9	2.9	108.0	5.7	18.3	13.2	4.9	22	11.5	1.2	20.6	2.8	117
Animal Planet	11.6	17.5	29.0	8.4	20.3	21.0	1.7	26.3	4.4	162.0	5.8	18.5	14.4	4.5	20.1	11.3	1.6	27.4	4	169
Comedy Central	7.2	11.0	31.0	4.3	10.5	18.6	0.7	11.2	3.2	117.0	3.3	10.5	14	2.8	12.5	12	0.6	10.5	2.6	111

	1 dog			2–3 dogs			4+ dogs				1 cat			2–3 cats			4+ cats			
	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	Index	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	Index
Cooking Channel	6.6	10.0	25.8	4.3	10.4	16.9	0.8	11.8	3.1	114.0	3.2	10.4	12.7	1.7	7.7	6.7	0.7	12.3	2.8	119
Discovery Channel	14.0	21.2	28.0	10.2	24.7	20.5	1.8	26.7	3.4	131.0	6.4	20.7	12.9	5.1	22.6	10.2	1.5	25.2	2.9	124
Food Network	15.5	23.5	29.5	9.3	22.3	17.6	1.3	20.2	2.5	94.0	6.4	22.3	13.2	4.7	20.8	8.9	1.2	21.6	2.4	101
Fox News Channel	17.6	26.7	27.9	11.3	27.2	17.9	1.6	24.0	2.5	94.0	8.1	25.9	12.8	5.4	24	8.6	1.7	28.6	2.6	112
History Channel	17.3	26.1	27.7	11.9	28.7	19.1	2.3	34.3	3.6	136.0	8.7	28.0	14	6.3	27.8	10	1.8	32	3	126
HGTV	15.0	22.8	30.1	9.6	23.2	19.3	0.9	14.3	1.9	70.0	6.7	21.4	13.3	4.8	21.4	9.7	1.1	19.1	2.2	94
Syfy	8.2	12.5	27.9	5.9	14.3	20.1	1.3	20.1	4.5	167.0	4	13.0	13.7	3.5	15.7	12	1.1	18.2	3.6	152
Weather Channel	14.5	21.5	100.0	8.6	20.8	16.3	1.6	24.7	3.1	115.0	6.7	21.4	12.6	4.8	21.1	9	1.3	22.5	2.5	105

Source: Spring 2017 GfK MRI

Use the information provided in Table 2 to answer the following question:

1 Your friend assumed that Animal Planet is the best channel to find pet owners who use pet services frequently. Do your data support or contradict her belief? Why?

TABLE 2 Pet Service Usage and Cable Channel Viewing

	Has Pet Insurance			Used Pet Daycare			Used Pet Grooming			1 Vet Vist			2-3 Vet Visits			4+ Vet Visits		
Target	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %
Total	10.3	100	4.2	4.1	100	1.7	35.8	100	14.6	36.2	100	14.7	46.6	100	19	26.2	100	10.7
HH subscribes to Cable	4.5	43.7	4.1	1.9	47.6	1.8	15.7	43.9	14.2	15.5	42.9	14	20.7	44.4	18.6	11	42	9.9
AMC	2	18.9	4.5	0.7	17.1	1.6	6.8	18.9	15.7	6.6	18.2	15.3	8.7	18.7	20.2	5.4	20.8	12.6
Animal Planet	1.9	18	4.7	0.8	19.9	2	7.1	19.8	17.7	6.9	18.9	17.2	8.6	18.5	21.5	5	19	12.5
Comedy Central	1.4	13.5	6	0.5	13.3	2.3	3.5	9.7	14.8	4.1	11.3	17.5	4.7	10.2	20.3	3	11.4	12.8
Cooking Channel	1	9.8	4	0.3	8.4	1.3	3.9	10.9	15.3	3.7	10.2	14.5	4.7	10.2	18.6	2.5	9.6	9.9
Discovery Channel	2.4	22.9	4.8	0.9	22	1.8	8.6	23.9	17.1	8.4	23.1	16.7	10.2	21.8	20.3	6.1	23.4	12.3
Food Network	2.5	24.4	4.8	1	24.8	1.9	9.2	25.6	17.4	8.3	22.9	15.8	10.4	22.2	19.7	5.7	22	11
Fox News Channel	2.5	24.4	4	1	24.8	1.6	10.2	28.6	16.2	9.6	26.6	15.3	12.3	26.6	15.3	7.1	27.2	11.3
History Channel	2.8	27.3	4.5	1.1	27.8	1.8	10.1	28.1	16.2	9.8	27	15.7	12.8	27.6	20.6	7.6	29.2	12.3
HGTV	2.2	20.8	4.3	0.9	21.2	1.7	8.7	24.3	17.5	8.2	22.6	16.4	10.6	22.7	21.2	6.1	23.2	12.2
Syfy	1.4	13.4	4.7	0.6	14.6	2	4.4	12.2	14.7	4.6	12.8	15.7	5.9	12.6	19.9	4.1	15.5	13.8
Weather Channel	1.9	18.1	3.5	0.7	16	1.2	7.8	21.8	14.8	8.1	22.4	15.4	10.3	22.1	19.4	5.7	21.9	10.9

Source: Spring 2017 GfK MRI

Use the information provided in Table 3 to answer the following questions:

1 Assuming people only buy from one of the three options, how many people in total bought their pet food from a discount store, a pet specialty store, or directly from their veterinarian? What percentage of this total bought from their veterinarian?

2 Which cable channel had the largest percentage of viewers who buy their pet food from a veterinarian?

TABLE 3 Pet Food Buying and Cable Channel Viewing

	Discount Store			Pet specialty shop			Veterinarian		
Target	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %	(mils)	Vert %	Horz %
Total	20.2	100	8.2	56.3	100	22.9	13.5	100	5.5
HH subscribes to Cable	7.9	39	7.1	24.5	43.5	22	6.1	45.2	5.5
AMC	3.8	18.8	8.8	11.1	19.8	25.8	2.8	20.4	6.4
Animal Planet	4.2	20.8	10.5	10.7	19	26.7	2.4	17.5	5.9
Comedy Central	1.8	9	7.7	6.7	11.8	28.5	1.5	11	6.4
Cooking Channel	1.9	9.4	7.5	5.7	10.2	22.5	1.7	12.4	6.6
Discovery Channel	4.2	21	8.5	13	23.1	26	0.3	22.3	6
Food Network	4.7	23.1	8.9	13.5	24	25.6	3.5	25.6	6.6
Fox News Channel	5.2	25.9	8.3	14	25	22.3	3.7	27.2	5.8
History Channel	5.9	29.1	9.4	15.2	27.1	24.5	3.8	27.8	6.2
HGTV	4.3	21.5	8.7	13.1	23.4	26.3	3.2	23.9	6.5
Syfy	2.9	14.4	9.8	6.9	12.3	23.4	2	14.4	6.6
Weather Channel	4.8	23.5	9	12.1	21.5	22.9	3.3	24.6	6.3

Source: Spring 2017 GfK MRI

▶ DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

1. Based only on the information provided, which three cable channels would you recommend as the best choices for promoting the business? Which three cable channels do you think are the poorest fit?
2. What other additional information would you like to have so that you could make a more informed recommendation? Why is it important? How could you find out this information?
3. If the pet store chain told you that its services were much more profitable than its product (toys, food, and so on) sales, would that change your recommendation? Why or why not?

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MOSCHINO

Section 4

Consumers in Their Social and Cultural Settings

This fourth and final section focuses on the external factors that influence our identities as consumers and the decisions we make. Chapter 11 provides an overview of group processes and the role that social media plays in consumer decision making. In Chapter 12 we focus on the ways our income and social status relative to others helps to define who we are. Chapter 13 discusses the subcultures that help to determine how we buy and consume. Finally, in Chapter 14, we dive into broad yet powerful cultural influences on consumer behavior.

Chapters Ahead



Chapter 11
Group Influences and Social Media



Chapter 12
Income and Social Class



Chapter 13
Subcultures



Chapter 14
Culture

11 Group Influences and Social Media

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why

11-1 Other people and groups, especially those who possess social power, influence our decisions.

11-2 Marketers often need to understand *consumers'* behavior rather than a consumer's behavior.

11-3 Members of a family unit play different roles and have different amounts of influence when the family makes purchase decisions.

11-4 Word-of-mouth communication is the most important driver of product choice.

11-5 Opinion leaders' recommendations are more influential than others when we decide what to buy.

11-6 Social media changes the way we learn about and select products.



Source: Ljupco Smokovski/Shutterstock.

Zach leads a secret life. During the week, he is a straitlaced stock analyst for a major investment firm. However, his day job only pays the bills to finance his real passion: cruising on his Harley-Davidson Road Glide Custom. His Facebook posts are filled with lunchtime laments about how much he'd rather be out on the road (hopefully his boss won't try to friend him). His girlfriend Karen worries a bit about his getting totaled in an accident, but Zach knows if he stays alert the only way that will probably happen is if he can't kick his habit of texting her while he's driving the bike.

Come Friday evening, it's off with the Brooks Brothers suit and on with the black leather, as he trades in his Lexus for his treasured Harley. A dedicated member of Harley Owners Group (HOG), Zach belongs to the rich urban bikers (RUBs) faction of Harley riders. Everyone in his group wears expensive leather vests with Harley insignias and owns customized "low riders." Just this week, Zach finally got his new Harley perforated black leather jacket at the company's Motorclothes Merchandise web page.[1] As one of the Harley web pages observed, "It's one thing to have people buy your products. It's another thing to have them tattoo your name on their bodies." Zach had to restrain himself from buying more Harley stuff; there were vests, eyewear, belts, buckles, scarves, watches, jewelry, and even housewares ("home is the road") for sale.

He settled for a set of Harley salt-and-pepper shakers that would be perfect for his buddy Doug's new crib.

Zach's experiences on social media platforms make him realize the lengths to which some of his fellow enthusiasts go to make sure others know they are Hog riders. Two of his riding buddies are in a lively competition to be "mayor" of the local Harley dealership on Foursquare, whereas many others tweet to inform people about a group ride that will occur later in the day—kind of a flash mob on wheels.

Zach spends a lot of money to outfit himself to be like the rest of the group, but it's worth it. He feels a real sense of brotherhood with his fellow RUBs. The group rides together in two-column formation to bike rallies that sometimes attract up to 300,000 cycle enthusiasts. What a sense of power he feels when they all cruise together—it's them against the world!

Of course, an added benefit is the business networking he's accomplished during his jaunts with his fellow professionals who also wait for the weekend to "ride on the wild side; these days it would be professional suicide to let your contacts get cold, and you can't just count on LinkedIn to stay in the loop."[2]

Groups

OBJECTIVE 11-1
Other people and groups, especially those who possess social power, influence our decisions.

Humans are social animals. We belong to groups, try to please others, and look to others' behavior for clues about what we should do in public settings. In fact, our desire to "fit in" or to identify with desirable individuals or groups is the primary motivation for many of our consumption behaviors. We may go to great lengths to please the members of a group whose acceptance we covet.[3]

Social identity theory argues that each of us has several "selves" that relate to groups. These linkages are so important that we think of ourselves not just as "I," but also as "we." In addition, we favor others whom we feel share the same identity—even if that identity is superficial and virtually meaningless. In numerous experiments that employ the **minimal group paradigm**, researchers show that even when they arbitrarily assign subjects to one group or another, people favor those who wind up in the same group.[4] The cues we use to decide if we should identify with—and thus trust—others may be quite subtle. For example, people who simply eat the same things (what researchers term **IFC —Incidental Food Consumption**)—like, trust, and cooperate with one another more than those who don't.[5]

Zach's biker group is an important part of his identity, and this membership influences many of his buying decisions. He has spent many thousands of dollars on parts and accessories since he became a RUB. His fellow riders bond via their consumption choices, so total strangers feel an immediate connection with one another when they meet. The publisher of *American Iron*, an industry magazine, observed, "You don't buy a Harley because it's a superior bike, you buy a Harley to be a part of a family."[6]

Zach doesn't model himself after just *any* biker—only the RUB members with whom he really identifies can exert that kind of influence on him. For example, Zach's group doesn't have much to do with outlaw clubs whose blue-collar riders sport big Harley tattoos. The members of his group also have only polite contact with "Ma and Pa" bikers, whose rides are the epitome of comfort and feature such niceties as radios, heated handgrips, and floorboards.

Social Power

Why are groups so persuasive? The answer lies in the potential power they wield over us. **Social power** describes "the capacity to alter the actions of others."[7] The degree to which you are able to make someone else do something, regardless of whether that person does it willingly, gives you power over that person. The following classification of power bases helps us to distinguish among the reasons a person exerts power over another, the degree to which the influence is voluntary, and whether this influence will continue to have an effect even when the source of the power isn't around.[8]

- **Referent power**—If a person admires the qualities of a person or a group, he tries to copy the referent's behaviors (e.g., choice of clothing, cars, leisure activities). Prominent people in all walks of life affect our consumption behaviors by virtue of product endorsements (e.g., Lady Gaga for Polaroid), distinctive fashion statements (e.g., Kim Kardashian's displays of high-end designer clothing), or championing causes (e.g., Brad Pitt for UNICEF). **Referent power** is important to many marketing strategies because consumers voluntarily modify what they do and buy to identify with a referent.
- **Information power**—A person possesses **information power** simply because he or she knows something others would like to know. Editors of trade publications such as *Women's Wear Daily* often possess tremendous power because of their ability to compile and disseminate information that can make or break individual designers or companies. People with information power are able to influence consumer opinion by virtue of their access to the knowledge that provides some kind of competitive advantage.
- **Legitimate power**—Sometimes we grant power by virtue of social agreements, such as the authority we give to police officers, soldiers, and yes, even professors. The **legitimate power** a uniform confers wields authority in consumer contexts, including teaching hospitals where medical students don white coats to enhance their standing with patients.[9] Marketers "borrow" this form of power to influence consumers. For example, an ad that shows a model who wears a white doctor's coat adds an aura of legitimacy or authority to the presentation of the product ("I'm not a doctor, but I play one on TV").
- **Expert power**—U.S. Robotics signed up the late British physicist Stephen Hawking to endorse its modems. A company executive commented, "We wanted to generate trust. So we found visionaries who use U.S. Robotics technology, and we let them tell the consumer how it makes their lives more productive." Hawking, who had Lou Gehrig's disease and spoke via a synthesizer, said in one TV spot, "My body may be stuck in this chair, but with the internet my mind can go to the end of the universe."[10] Hawking's **expert power** derived from the knowledge he possessed about a content area. This helps to explain the weight many of us assign to professional critics' reviews of restaurants, books, movies, and cars—even though, with the advent of blogs and open source references such as *Wikipedia*, it's getting a lot harder to tell just who is really an expert![11]
- **Reward power**—A person or group with the means to provide positive reinforcement (see Chapter 4) has **reward power**. The reward may be the tangible kind, such as the contestants on *Survivor* experience when their comrades vote them off the island. Or it can be more intangible, such as the gushing feedback the judges on *The Voice* deliver to contestants.
- **Coercive power**—We exert **coercive power** when we influence someone because of social or physical intimidation. A threat is often effective in the short term, but it doesn't tend to stick because we revert to our original behavior as soon as the bully



Members of a reference group can motivate us (or maybe our pets?) to lose weight, stop smoking, or make other lifestyle changes.
Source: Courtesy of Jardiland and ROSAPARK agency. Picture by www.lippoth.com, Photoshop artists: Graziella Vermeil & Pierrick Le Gros.

leaves the scene. Fortunately, marketers rarely try to use this type of power (unless you count those annoying calls from telemarketers!). However, we can see elements of this power base in the fear appeals we talked about in Chapter 8, as well as in intimidating salespeople who try to succeed with a "hard sell."

Reference Groups

Just because we find ourselves in the company of others doesn't necessarily mean they impact what we say or do. A **reference group** is an actual or imaginary individual or group that significantly *influences* an individual's evaluations, aspirations, or behavior.[12] For our friend Zach, the RUBs with whom he hangs out are a reference group.

Research on smoking cessation programs powerfully illustrates the impact of reference groups. The study found that smokers tend to quit in sets: When one person quits, this creates a ripple effect that motivates others in his social network to give up the death sticks also. The researchers followed thousands of smokers and nonsmokers for more than 30 years, and they also tracked their networks of relatives, coworkers, and friends. They discovered that over the years, the smokers tended to cluster together (on average in groups of three). As the overall U.S. smoking rate declined dramatically during this period, the number of clusters in the sample decreased, but the remaining clusters stayed the same size; this indicated that people quit in groups rather than as individuals. Not surprisingly, some social connections were more powerful than others. A spouse who quit had a bigger impact than did a friend, whereas friends had more influence than siblings. Coworkers had an influence only in small firms where everyone knew each other.[15]

Reference group influences don't work the same way for all types of products and consumption activities. For example, we're not as likely to take others' preferences into account when we choose products that are not complex,

The Tangled Web

The Web has spawned the rise of a new kind of avoidance group: **antibrand communities**. These groups also coalesce around a celebrity, store, or brand, but in this case they're united by their disdain for it. The U.K.–based anti-McDonald's site McSpotlight claims, "McDonald's spends over $2 billion a year broadcasting their glossy image to the world. This is a small space for alternatives to be heard."[13]

One team of researchers that studies these communities observes that they tend to attract social idealists who advocate non-materialistic lifestyles. After they interviewed members of online communities who oppose these three companies, they concluded that these antibrand communities provide a meeting place for those who share a moral stance; a support network to achieve common goals; a way to cope with workplace frustrations (many members actually work for the companies they bash!); and a hub for information, activities, and related resources.[14]

that are low in perceived risk, or that we can try before we buy.[16] Although two or more people normally form a group, we often use the term *reference group* a bit more loosely to describe *any* external influence that provides social cues.[17] The referent may be a cultural figure who has an impact on many people (e.g., the Pope) or a person or group whose influence operates only in the consumer's immediate environment (e.g., the "popular" kids in high school). Reference groups that affect consumption can include parents, fellow motorcycle enthusiasts, the Tea Party, or even the Chicago Bears, the Zac Brown Band, or Spike Lee.

A **membership reference group** consists of people we actually know. In contrast although we don't know those in an **aspirational reference group**, we admire them anyway. These people are likely to be successful businesspeople, athletes, performers, or anyone else who rocks our world. Not surprisingly, many marketing communications that specifically adopt a reference group appeal concentrate on highly visible celebrities; they link these people to brands so that the products they use or endorse also take on this aspirational quality. For example, an amateur basketball player who idolizes Miami Heat star Dwyane Wade might drool over a pair of Air Jordan 12 Dwyane Wade PE shoes.[18] One study of business students who aspired to the "executive" role found a strong relationship between products they associated with their *ideal selves* (see Chapter 6) and those they assumed that real executives own.[19]

Reference groups impact our buying decisions both positively and negatively. In most cases, we model our behavior to be in line with what we think the group expects us to do. Sometimes, however, we also deliberately do the *opposite* if we want to distance ourselves from **avoidance groups**. You may carefully study the dress or mannerisms of a group you dislike (e.g., "nerds," "druggies," or "preppies") and scrupulously avoid buying anything that might identify you with that group. Rebellious adolescents do the opposite of what their parents desire to make a statement about their independence. In one study, college freshmen reported consuming less alcohol when they associated it with their avoidance groups.[20]

Your motivation to distance yourself from a negative reference group can be as powerful or more powerful than your desire to please a positive group.[21] That's why advertisements occasionally show an undesirable person who uses a competitor's product. This kind of execution subtly makes the point that you can avoid winding up like *that* kind of person if you just stay away from the products he buys. As a once-popular book reminded us, "Real men *don't* eat quiche!"[22]

Marketing Opportunity

Most consumers only admire their aspirational reference groups from afar; however, more and more of them shell out big bucks to get up close and personal with their heroes. *Fantasy camps* are a $1 billion industry as people pay for the chance to hang out—and play with—their idols. Baseball camps that mix retired players with fans have been around for many years, but now other types let people mingle with their favorite hockey players, poker players, even members of the U.S. women's national soccer team. At one camp, 80 people each paid about $8,000 to jam with rock stars including Nils Lofgren, Dickey Betts, and Roger Daltrey. One enthusiastic novice gushed afterward, "We all grow up with heroes and never get to share a moment with them. But I got to live out my fantasy."[23]



Fantasy camps connect fans with their aspirational reference groups.
Source: Courtesy of Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp.

Conformity

The early Bohemians who lived in Paris around 1830 made a point of behaving, well, differently from others. One flamboyant figure of the time earned notoriety because he walked a lobster on a leash through the gardens of the Royal Palace. His friends drank wine from human skulls, cut their beards in strange shapes, and slept in tents on the floors of their garrets.[24] Sounds a bit like some frat houses we've visited.

Although in every age there certainly are those who "march to their own drummers," most people tend to follow society's expectations regarding how they should act and look (with a little improvisation here and there, of course). **Conformity** is a change in beliefs or actions as a reaction to real or imagined group pressure. For a society to function, its members develop **norms** or informal rules that govern behavior. Without these rules, we would have chaos. Imagine the confusion if a simple norm such as "always stop for a red traffic light" did not exist.

We conform in many small ways every day, even though we don't always realize it. Unspoken rules govern many aspects of consumption. In addition to norms regarding appropriate use of clothing and other personal items, we conform to rules that include gift-giving (we expect birthday presents from loved ones and get upset if they don't materialize), heterosexual roles (men often pick up the check on a first date), and personal hygiene (our friends expect us to shower regularly).



Do your own thing? These men all were photographed in the same spot during a two hour period.

Source: Photo note April 15, 2005, Amsterdam. © Hans Eijkelboom. All Rights Reserved.

The Tangled Web

When we make decisions as part of a group, we tend to have fewer restraints on our behavior. For example, we sometimes behave more wildly at costume parties or on Halloween than we do when others can easily identify us. This is the phenomenon of **deindividuation**, a process whereby individual identities become submerged within a group. Deindividuation happens online as well. Researchers call this the **Gyges Effect**. The term comes from a myth called The Ring of Gyges: A shepherd discovers a ring that makes him invisible at will. He uses the anonymity of the ring to seduce the queen, assassinate the king, and take over the kingdom. In the present day, this myth reminds us that the anonymity of the internet can cause otherwise moral people to experience a loss of inhibition and post things they would never say to a person in the real world. People who do this are known in the industry as **internet trolls**. They post threats about rape and other violence, or bullying comments.[25] Trolls pose a big problem for social networks. As the head of Twitter wrote in a leaked memo, "I'm frankly ashamed of how poorly we've dealt with this issue during my tenure as CEO."

The pressure to conform conflicts with another motivation we've already discussed: The need to be unique. How can we reconcile these two goals? One study suggests that we try to have it both ways: We line up with a group on one dimension such as choosing a popular brand, but we differentiate ourselves on another by choosing a unique attribute such as color.[26]

Within limits, people approve of others who exhibit nonconforming behavior. This may be because we assume someone who makes unconventional choices is more powerful or competent, so he or she can afford to go out on a limb. Researchers term this the **Red Sneakers Effect** (to describe a brave person who sports a pair of red kicks in a professional setting). Indeed, they find that nonconforming behaviors under some conditions do lead to more positive impressions, but these disappear when the observer is unsure why the brave soul is violating a norm or if they decide the violator is not doing it intentionally (i.e., he or she is just clueless).[27]

Although we observe conformity in many settings (just remember high school!), we don't mimic others' behaviors all the time. What makes it more likely that we'll conform? These are some common culprits:[28]

- **Cultural pressures**—Different cultures encourage conformity to a greater or lesser degree. Americans like to say, "the squeaky wheel gets the grease," whereas in Japan a popular expression is "the nail that stands up gets hammered down." In a study, groups of passengers who arrived at an airport were asked to complete a survey: They were offered a handful of pens to use, for example, four orange and one green. People of European descent more often chose the one pen that stood out, and Asians chose the color that was like the majority of the others.[29]
- **Fear of deviance**—The individual may have reason to believe that the group will apply *sanctions* to punish nonconforming behaviors. It's not unusual to observe adolescents who shun a peer who is "different" or a corporation or university that passes over a person for promotion because he or she is not a "team player."
- **Commitment**—The more people are dedicated to a group and value their membership in it, the greater their motivation to conform to the group's wishes. Rock groupies and followers of TV evangelists may do anything their idols ask of them, and terrorists become martyrs for their cause. According to the



Food servers often feel the pain of social loafing.
Source: Corepics VOF/Shutterstock

Principle of Least Interest the person who is *least* committed to staying in a relationship has the most power because that party doesn't care as much if the other person rejects him.[30] Remember that on your next date.

- **Group unanimity, size, and expertise**—As groups gain in power, compliance increases. It is often harder to resist the demands of a large number of people than only a few, especially when a "mob mentality" rules.
- **Susceptibility to interpersonal influence**—This trait refers to an individual's need to have others think highly of him or her.
- **Environmental cues**—One study reported that people are more likely to conform when they make decisions in a warm room. Apparently the warmth caused participants to feel closer to other decision makers and this feeling led them to assume the others' opinions were more valid. In one part of the study the researchers analyzed betting behavior at a racetrack over a three-year period. Sure enough, people were more likely to bet on the "favorite" horse on warmer days.[31]

Marketing Pitfall

Social loafing happens when we don't devote as much time and effort to a task as we could because our contribution is part of a larger group effort.[32] You may have experienced this if you've worked on a group project for a class! Servers are painfully aware of social loafing: People who eat in groups tend to tip less per person than when they eat alone.[33] For this reason, many restaurants automatically tack on a fixed gratuity for groups of six or more.

Brand Communities

Before it released the popular Xbox game *Halo 2*, Bungie Studios put up a website to explain the story line. However, there was a catch: The story was written from the point of view of the Covenant (the aliens who are preparing to attack Earth in the game)—and in *their* language. Within 48 hours, avid gamers around the world shared information in gaming chat rooms to crack the code and translate the text. More than 1.5 million people preordered the game before its release.[34]

A **brand community** is a group of consumers—like those zealous Halo players—who share a set of social relationships based on usage of or interest in a product. In virtually any category, you'll find passionate brand communities (in some cases devoted to brands that don't even exist anymore); examples include the 3Com Ergo Audrey (discontinued internet appliance), Apple Newton (discontinued personal digital assistant), BMW MINI (car), Garmin (GPS device), Jones Soda (carbonated beverage), Lomo and Holga (cameras), Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers (musical group), StriVectin (cosmeceutical), and *Xena: Warrior Princess* (TV program).

Unlike other kinds of communities, these members typically don't live near each other—except when they may meet for brief periods at organized events or **brandfests** that community-oriented companies such as Jeep or Harley-Davidson sponsor. These events help owners to "bond" with fellow enthusiasts and strengthen their identification with the product as well as with others they meet who share their passion.

Researchers find that people who participate in these events feel more positive about the sponsor's products as a result, and this enhances brand loyalty. They tend to forgive product failures or lapses in service quality, and they're less likely to switch brands even if they learn that competing products are as good or better. Furthermore, these community members become emotionally involved in the company's welfare, and they often serve as brand missionaries because they carry its marketing message to others.[35]

Researchers find that brand community members do more than help the product build buzz; their inputs actually create added value for themselves and other members as they develop better ways to use and customize products. It's common for experienced users to coach "newbies" in ways to maximize their enjoyment of the product, so that more and more people benefit from a network of satisfied participants.[36] We get a good picture of this process of **collective value creation** when we look at online support communities that encourage members to reach their

weight loss goals. One study analyzed online forums sponsored by Weight Watchers and Obesity Help, and found that the exchange of support people offer one another (often anonymously) helps people feel more committed to their goals.[37]

OBJECTIVE 11-2 Marketers often need to understand *consumers'* behavior rather than a consumer's behavior.

Collective Decision Making: How Groups Influence What We Buy

As if the decision-making process we reviewed in Chapter 9 wasn't complicated enough, the full story is even more "interesting." That's because many of the decisions we make are *collaborative.* In these cases, other people participate in the problem-solving sequence—from initial problem recognition and information search to evaluation of alternatives and product choice. To further muddy the waters, the **collective decision-making** process often includes two or more people who may not have the same level of investment in the outcome, the same tastes and preferences, or the same consumption priorities. If you've ever debated where to go out to eat with your friends, or perhaps bickered about whose turn it is to do the dishes, you get the picture. You can read 50 restaurant reviews on Yelp!, and it's still like pulling teeth to reach a consensus.

Why do we lump together big corporations and small families in this section? One important similarity is that in both cases individuals or groups play a number of specific roles when they choose products or services for their organizational unit.[38] Depending on the decision, the choice may include some or all of the group members, and different group members play important roles in what can be a complicated process. These roles include the following:

- **Initiator**—The person who brings up the idea or identifies a need.
- **Gatekeeper**—The person who conducts the information search and controls the flow of information available to the group. In organizational contexts, the gatekeeper identifies possible vendors and products for the rest of the group to consider.
- **Influencer**—The person who tries to sway the outcome of the decision. Some people may be more motivated than others to get involved, and participants also possess different amounts of power to get their point across.
- **Buyer**—The person who actually makes the purchase. The buyer may or may not actually use the product.
- **User**—The person who actually consumes the product or service.

B2B Decision Making

Many employees of corporations or other organizations make purchase decisions on a daily basis. **Organizational buyers** are people who purchase goods and services on behalf of companies for the companies' use in manufacturing, distribution, or resale. These individuals buy from **business-to-business (B2B) marketers** that must satisfy the needs of organizations such as corporations, government agencies, hospitals, and retailers. In terms of sheer volume, B2B is where the action is: Roughly $2 trillion worth of products and services change hands among organizations, which is actually *more* than end consumers purchase.

Organizational buyers have a lot of responsibility. They decide on the vendors with whom they want to do business, and what specific items they require from these suppliers. The items they consider range in price and significance from paper clips (by the case, not the box) to multimillion-dollar computer systems. A number of factors influence the organizational buyer's perception of the purchase situation. These include his or her *expectations* of the supplier (e.g., product quality, the competence and behavior of the firm's employees, and prior experiences in dealing with that supplier), the *organizational climate* of the company (i.e., how it rewards performance and what it values), and the buyer's *assessment* of his or her own performance (e.g., whether he or she believes in taking risks).[39]

Like other consumers, organizational buyers engage in a learning process in which employees share information with one another and develop an "organizational memory" that consists of shared beliefs and assumptions about the best choices to make.[40] Just as the "market beliefs" we discussed previously influence a consumer while shopping with the family on the weekend, the same thing happens at the office. He or she (perhaps with fellow employees) solves problems as they search for information, evaluate alternatives, and decide.[41] There are, of course, some important differences between the two situations.

How Does B2B Decision Making Compare with Consumer Decision Making?

Let's summarize the major differences between organizational and industrial purchase decisions versus individual consumer decisions:[42]

- The purchase decisions that companies make frequently involve many people, including those who do the actual buying, those who directly or indirectly influence this decision, and the employees who will actually use the product or service.
- Organizations and companies often use precise technical specifications that require a lot of knowledge about the product category.
- Impulse buying is rare (industrial buyers do not suddenly get an "urge to splurge" on lead pipe or silicon chips). Because buyers are professionals, they base their decisions on past experience and they carefully weigh alternatives.
- Decisions often are risky, especially in the sense that buyers' careers may ride on their judgment.
- The dollar volume of purchases is often substantial; it dwarfs most individual consumers' grocery bills or mortgage payments. One hundred to 250 organizational customers typically account for more than half of a supplier's sales volume, which gives the buyers a lot of influence over the supplier.
- B2B marketing often emphasizes personal selling more than advertising or other forms of promotion. Dealing with organizational buyers typically requires more face-to-face contact than when marketers sell to end consumers.

We must consider these important features when we try to understand the purchasing decisions organizations make. Having said that, however, there are actually more similarities between organizational buyers and ordinary consumers than many people realize. True, organizational purchase decisions do tend to have a higher economic or functional component compared to individual consumer choices, but emotional aspects do play a role. Organizational buyers may appear to the outsider to be models of rationality, but at times they base their decisions on brand loyalty, on long-term relationships with particular suppliers or salespeople, or even on aesthetic

preferences. Even investors, who are supposed to make cold, calculated judgments about the worth of companies based on financial indicators, sometimes are influenced instead by other concerns; for instance, they may be biased toward companies that provide better working conditions for employees or that are unusual in some other way.[43]

As you'd expect, the organizational decision-making process depends on the purchase. Similar to when individuals choose, the more complex, novel, or risky the decision, the more effort the group devotes to information search and to evaluating alternatives. However, if these buyers rely on a fixed set of suppliers for routine purchases, this greatly reduces their information search and effort.[44] Typically, a group of people (members of a **buying center**) plays different roles in more complex organizational decisions. As we will see later on, this joint involvement is somewhat similar to family decision making, in which family members are likely to participate in more important purchases. Note: Unlike a shopping center, a buying center does not refer to a physical place, but rather the group of people who make the decision.

The classic **buyclass theory of purchasing** divides organizational buying decisions into three types that range from the least to the most complex. Three decision-making dimensions describe the purchasing strategies of an organizational buyer:[45]

1. The level of information he or she must gather prior to the decision.
2. The seriousness with which he or she must consider all possible alternatives.
3. The degree to which he or she is familiar with the purchase.

In practice, these three dimensions relate to how much cognitive effort the buyer expends when he or she decides. Three types of "buyclasses," or strategies determined by these dimensions, encompass most organizational decision situations.[46] Table 11.1 summarizes these strategies.

- A **straight rebuy** is a habitual decision. It's an automatic choice, as when an inventory level reaches a preestablished reorder point. Most organizations maintain an approved vendor list, and as long as experience with a supplier is satisfactory, there is little or no ongoing information search or evaluation.
- A **modified rebuy** situation involves limited decision making. It occurs when an organization wants to repurchase a product or service but also wants to make some minor modifications. This decision might involve a limited search for information among a few vendors. One or a few people will probably make the final decision.
- A **new task** involves extensive problem solving. Because the company hasn't made a similar decision already, there is often a serious risk that the product won't perform as it should or that it will be too costly. This is when the organization designates a buying center with assorted specialists to evaluate the purchase, and they typically gather a lot of information before they come to a decision.

TABLE 11.1 Types of Organizational Buying Decisions

Buying Situation	Extent of Effort	Risk	Buyer's Involvement
Straight rebuy	Habitual decision-making	Low	Automatic reorder
Modified rebuy	Limited problem solving	Low to moderate	One or a few
New task	Extensive problem solving	High	Many

Source: Data from Patrick J. Robinson, Charles W. Faris, and Yoram Wind, *Industrial Buying and Creative Marketing* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1967).



Organizations often assemble teams to make purchasing decisions.
Source: Courtesy of Capstone Turbine Corporation.

B2B E-Commerce

Business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce refers to internet interactions between two or more businesses or organizations. This includes exchanges of information, products, services, or payments. The web revolutionized the way companies communicate with other firms and even the way they share information with their own people. Today the majority of B2B companies, even those that until recently relied heavily on "old-school" techniques such as cold calls and mailed newsletters, use social media to connect with customers and business partners.[48]

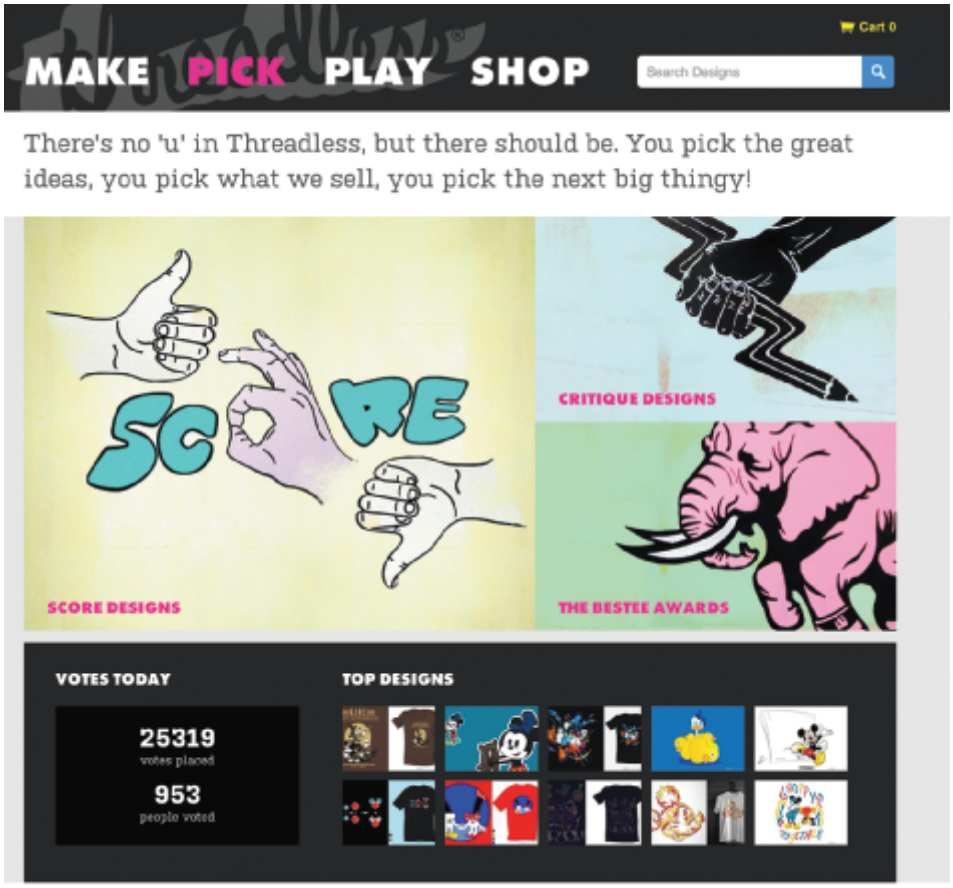
In the simplest form of B2B e-commerce, companies provide an online catalog of products and services that other businesses need. Companies such as Dell Computer use their site to deliver online technical support, product information, order status information, and customer service to corporate customers. Early on, Dell discovered that it could serve the needs of its customers more effectively if

Marketing Pitfall

Big technology companies such as Amazon, Apple, Google, and Microsoft as well as many start-ups have set their sights on the classroom as one of the next frontiers where organizations are spending millions of dollars on hardware and software to teach the next generation of students. The competition to convince big school systems to commit to new toys is fierce, and many companies are enlisting a key ally in the decision-making process: The teacher. Some outfits give teachers inexpensive swag like free technology, T-shirts, or even Amazon gift cards, in exchange for their support. Others fly educators to industry-sponsored conferences, sometimes at lush resorts. In an era where the average K to 12 teacher shells out $600 of his or her own money every year just to buy school supplies, it's hard to resist these perks. Although the evidence to support the educational benefits of many of these tech enhancements is shaky at best, a war for the hearts, minds, and wallets of school administrators is being fought as companies enlist teachers as foot soldiers —and as influencers in this complex but lucrative organizational decision.[47]

it tailored its internet presence to different customer segments. Today Dell's site allows shoppers to get recommendations based on their customer segment (home, home office, government, small business, and education). The company saves millions of dollars a year as it replaces hard-copy manuals with electronic downloads. For its larger customers, Dell provides customer-specific, password-protected pages that allow business customers to obtain technical support or to place an order.[49]

Are all of us smarter than each of us? A **prediction market** is one of the hottest trends in organizational decision-making techniques. This approach asserts that groups of people with knowledge about an industry are, collectively, better predictors of the future than are any of them as individuals. In a prediction market framework, companies from Microsoft to Eli Lilly and Hewlett-Packard empower their employees as "traders." Like a stock market, traders place bets on what they think will happen regarding future sales, the success of new products, or how other firms in a distribution channel will behave and they often receive a cash reward if their "stock picks" pan out. For example, the pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly routinely places multimillion-dollar bets on drug candidates that face overwhelming odds of failure. The relatively few new compounds that do succeed have to make enough money to cover the losses the others incur. Obviously, the company will benefit if it can separate the winners from the losers earlier in the process. Lilly ran an experiment in which about 50 of its employees involved in drug development, including chemists, biologists, and project managers, traded six mock drug candidates through an internal market. The group correctly predicted the three most successful drugs.[50] Or, surf over to the Hollywood Stock Exchange (hsx.com) to check out which



Threadless crowdsources product ideas and then sells the most popular ones to the community it maintains.
Source: Courtesy of Threadless.

celebrities and new movie releases traders think will succeed or bomb; you can bet Hollywood executives do![51]

Prediction markets are one element of **crowdsourcing**, which describes the growing practice of soliciting ideas for new products and even advertising campaigns from a user community. Under this model, companies no longer market to customers, they market *with* them.[52] The **wisdom of crowds** perspective (from a book by that name) argues that, under the right circumstances, groups are smarter than the smartest people in them. If this is true, it implies that large numbers of consumers can predict successful products.[53] Companies as diverse as Budweiser (which crowdsourced its new Black Crown beer) to handbag designer Alexander Wang today offer products that originated from ideas employees or customers submitted.[54]

Agile Marketing: B2B at High Speed

In business environments where speed of planning and execution is especially sensitive for competitive success, a new decision-making approach is becoming popular. This new strategic perspective is called **agile marketing**: It refers to using data and analytics to continuously source promising opportunities or solutions to problems in real time, deploying tests quickly, evaluating the results, and rapidly iterating (doing it over and over). An agile marketing organization can run hundreds of marketing campaigns simultaneously and generate multiple new ideas every week.

The agile marketing framework grew out of the software development field, which often uses a methodology called **scrum**. It involves the use of small teams that run quick "sprints" and frequently change up their approach based upon rapid and honest feedback.

How do marketers apply this approach? Basically an organization creates an elite team, kind of like a Special Forces operation in the military. They are removed from their daily assignments, and instead they meet in a "war room" to plot their quick strike. These groups should be small enough that everyone can communicate with each other easily—Jeff Bezos of Amazon specified they should be "two-pizza teams," in other words, teams no bigger than can be fed by two pizzas. A "scrum master" who leads the team sets priorities and manages "sprints" (one-to-two-week cycles of work). The group's mission (should they choose to accept it) is to execute a series of quick-turnaround experiments designed to create real bottom-line impact. For example, a retailer might want to test many approaches to optimizing conversion on its website (i.e., the percentage of people who visit the site and actually buy something).[55]

OBJECTIVE 11-3
Members of a family unit play different roles and have different amounts of influence when the family makes purchase decisions.

The Intimate Corporation: Family Decision Making

The decision process within a household unit resembles a business conference. Certain matters go on the table for discussion, different members advocate different actions based on their differing priorities and agendas, and there may be power struggles to rival any tale of corporate intrigue. In just about every living situation, whether it's a conventional family or students who share a sorority house or apartment, group members assume different roles just as purchasing agents, engineers, account executives, and others do within a company.

How Families Decide

There's nothing like a happy family, but we all know that type of harmony doesn't come easily when family members have to choose where to go on vacation, what to eat for dinner, or who gets to do the dishes. Decisions create conflict among family members to the extent that the issue is somehow important or novel; conflict also occurs if individuals have strong opinions about good and bad alternatives. The degree to which these factors generate conflict determines the type of decision the family will make.[57] Some specific factors that determine how much family decision conflict there will be include:[58]

- **Interpersonal need**—(a person's level of investment in the group): A teenager may care more about what his or her family buys for the house than will a college student who lives in a dorm. There's some evidence that investment in a marriage is diminishing among some younger couples who no longer view it as a lifelong commitment. One study reported that 43% of Gen Yers are happy with a **beta marriage**, in which they could choose to renew, renegotiate, or split up after an agreed number of years. It remains to be seen if today's "hook-up culture" will turn "till death do us part" into "swipe left for your next spouse."[59]
- **Product involvement and utility**—(the degree to which a person will use the product to satisfy a need): A mother who is an avid coffee drinker will obviously be more interested in the purchase of a new coffeemaker than will her teenage son who swigs Coke by the gallon.
- **Responsibility**—(for procurement, maintenance, payment, and so on): People are more likely to have disagreements about a decision if it entails long-term consequences and commitments. For example, a family decision about getting a dog may involve conflict over who will be responsible for walking and feeding it.
- **Power**—(or the degree to which one family member exerts influence over the others): In traditional families, the husband tends to have more power than the wife, who in turn has more than the oldest child, and so on. Conflict can arise when one person continually uses the power he has within the group to satisfy



American Girl produces historical-period characters complete with books, dolls, and accessories, as well as modern-period dolls. The company also operates The American Girl Place, where children who own the dolls drag their parents and grandparents to attractions including dioramas and a doll hair salon. Consumer researchers who studied the American Girl phenomenon concluded that part of the brand's huge popularity is due to its multigenerational appeal. After they interviewed numerous girls, mothers, and grandmothers, they found that consumers of all ages valued the opportunities for family connection and also learning about their heritage and those of other cultures.[56]
Source: Reprinted with permission of American Girl, Inc.

his own priorities. For example, if a child believed that his life would end if he did not receive a PlayStation for his birthday, he might be more willing to "cash in some chips" and throw a tantrum. Some new research shows that one way a partner in a close relationship can act out if they feel they have less power is via **oppositional brand choice**; they deliberately choose brands they know their partner doesn't like.[60]

Marketers need to figure out who makes the buying decisions in a family because this information tells them who to target and whether they need to reach both spouses to influence a choice. Researchers pay special attention to which spouse plays the role of the **family financial officer (FFO)**—the individual who keeps track of the family's bills and decides how to spend any surplus funds. In traditional families (and especially those with low educational levels), women are primarily responsible for family financial management: The man makes it and the woman spends it. Each spouse "specializes" in certain activities.[61] The pattern is different in families where more modern sex-role norms operate. These couples believe that both people should participate in family maintenance activities. In these cases, husbands assume more responsibility for laundering, housecleaning, grocery shopping, and so on, in addition to such traditionally "male" tasks as home maintenance and garbage removal.[62]

The **synoptic ideal** calls for the husband and wife to act as joint decision makers. Together they thoughtfully weigh alternatives, assign one another well-defined roles, and calmly make mutually beneficial consumer decisions. This model is widely accepted among U.S. couples, especially younger ones: They agree the ideal marriage is one in which both spouses work and share childcare and household duties. That's a big change from just 20 years ago, when less than half of the population approved of the dual-income family, and less than half of 1 percent of husbands knew how to operate a sponge mop.[63]

Still, the synoptic ideal is just that—an ideal. In real life, couples often don't have the luxury to make calm and rational joint decisions. Instead spousal decision making may be more about choosing whatever option will result in less conflict. A couple "reaches" rather than "makes" a decision. Researchers simply describe this



Roommates have to make collaborative decisions just as spouses do.
Source: Gadelshina Dina/Shutterstock.

process as "muddling through."[64] One common technique to simplify the decision-making process uses *heuristics*, like the ones we discussed previously in the chapter. The following decision-making patterns, which realtors frequently observe when a couple decides on a new house, illustrate how couples use heuristics:

- The couple defines their areas of common preference on obvious, objective dimensions rather than subtler, hard-to-define cues. For example, they may easily agree on the number of bedrooms they need in the new home, but they have a harder time when they need to agree on how the home should look.
- The couple negotiates a system of *task specialization* in which each is responsible for certain duties or decision areas and does not intrude on the other's "turf." For many couples, sex roles often dictate just what these territories are. For example, the wife may do advance scouting for houses that meet their requirements, and the husband determines whether the couple can obtain a mortgage.
- The likelihood of one partner conceding to the wishes of the other depends on how passionately each person desires a specific outcome. One spouse yields to the influence of the other in many cases simply because his or her preference for a certain attribute is not particularly intense. In other situations, he or she is more willing to fight for what he or she wants (in other words, "choose your battles").[65] In cases where intense preferences for different attributes exist, rather than attempting to influence each other, spouses will "trade off" a less-intense preference for a more strongly felt desire. For example, a husband who is somewhat indifferent about kitchen design may give in to his wife in exchange for permission to design his own "Man Cave."

So, who "wears the pants" in the family? Sometimes it's not obvious which spouse makes the decisions. Indeed, although many men literally wear the pants, it's women who buy them. Haggar Clothing's research showed that nearly half of married women bought pants for their husbands without the husbands being present, so the firm started to advertise its menswear products in women's magazines. When one family member chooses a product, this is an autonomic decision. In traditional households, for example, men often have sole responsibility to select a car, whereas decorating choices fall to women. Syncretic decisions, such as a vacation destination, involve both partners. These choices are common for vacations, homes, appliances, furniture, home electronics, and long-distance phone services. As the couple's educational level increases, they are more likely to make decisions together.[66] New research on food preferences shows that women are more likely to mimic their partner's choices of healthy or unhealthy foods when the relationship is still forming, while the reverse dynamic operates after the relationship is established. In other words, guys get to call the (food) shots when they're dating, but women are more influential once the two of them become a stable couple.[67] As many of us know, "happy wife, happy life."

One analysis of family decision making took a closer look at the idea that family members mutually construct a **family identity** that defines the household to both members and outsiders.[68] According to this perspective (which is similar to the role theory approach to consumer behavior we discussed in Chapter 1), family rituals, narratives (stories the members tell about the family), and everyday interactions help families maintain their structure, maintain their family character (day-to-day characteristics of family life), and clarify members' relationships to one another. The value of this approach to marketers is that it reminds us of how often products and services help to define the family identity. For example, a father might take his young children out for ice cream every Saturday afternoon, so this becomes a predictable



Our pets often play a central role in family identity.
Source: Courtesy The Dog Agency. www.thedogagency.com All Rights Reserved.

ceremony that defines their relationship. Or, a mom might seek the comfort of her Beats headphones to shield her from the noise when her kids play after school, while a TiVo "saves marriages" because it allows family members to compromise when they decide who gets access to the TV.

The Wife

As women continue to work outside the home in great number, their influence on household purchase decisions grows accordingly. The share of mothers employed full- or part-time has quadrupled since the 1950s and today accounts for nearly three-quarters of women with children at home. The number of women who are their families' sole or primary breadwinner also has soared, to 40 percent today from 11 percent in 1960.

When the husband is the primary or sole breadwinner, household spending decisions divide roughly equally. He makes about a third of them, she makes a third, and they make a third jointly. However, it's increasingly common for the wife to command a higher salary than the husband; almost 40 percent of married working women bring in more than their partner. When the wife earns more she is likely to make a much higher proportion of decisions about how the family unit spends its money. This is true even in areas where men traditionally make decisions: Women make up almost half of the $200 billion consumer-electronics business, and $105 billion of the $256 billion home-improvement market.[71]

Of course women pay a price for this enhanced role. Working mothers often struggle with what one researcher calls the **juggling lifestyle**: a frenzied, guilt-ridden compromise between conflicting cultural ideals of motherhood and professionalism.[72] This frantic way of life isn't surprising in light of a survey by the U.S. Department of Labor showing that the average working woman spends about twice as much time as the average working man on household chores and the care of children. She also gets about an hour less sleep each night than the average stay-at-home mom.[73]

And, despite this shift in decision-making responsibilities, women are still primarily responsible for the continuation of the family's **kin-network system**. They maintain ties among family members, both immediate and extended. Women are more likely to coordinate visits among relatives, stay in touch with family

The Tangled Web

Facebook has an impact on couples' relationships, perhaps because the platform makes it easier for people to rekindle old romances. In a survey of attorneys, two-thirds of divorce lawyers identified Facebook as the primary source of evidence in their cases. The large majority reports that evidence for infidelity also turns up on online photo albums, profile pages, and Tweets.[69] Apparently many divorces occur when partners find "flirty messages" on their spouse's Facebook wall. One lawyer offered some timely advice to people in the middle of a divorce proceeding: "Avoid posting photos of your new lover until it's all over."[70]

members, send greeting cards, and arrange social engagements.[74] This organizing role means that women often make important decisions about the family's leisure activities, and they are more likely to decide with whom the family will socialize.

The Husband

It's increasingly common to tune into TV commercials that depict a domestic version of fathers who tenderly and wisely look after the kids. Indeed this updated picture even has its own name: **Dadvertising**. A Cheerios commercial, for example, shows a confident dad taking charge of a hectic weekday morning. The campaign also features a dedicated Tumblr page and Twitter hashtag, #HowToDad.[75]

As we've seen, women's roles within the family decision-making unit are changing, but so are those of men. For one thing, single men remain a powerful and often ignored force in the marketplace. Right now, 3 out of 10 men are single, and more than 80 percent of them make the sole or key big-ticket decisions in their households.

Another driver of this change is that as we've just seen, more women are working outside the home and at better-paying jobs. This means that a growing number of husbands today stay home with the kids: The Census Bureau reports that one-fifth of fathers with preschool-age children and working wives are the primary caretaker. As one marketing executive observed, "Kids are going to grow up with dads that give them baths and drive them to soccer and are cutting up oranges for team snacks." Already, by some estimates men do more than half of the grocery shopping in the United States.

This shift causes marketers to reexamine how they sell a range of products as they try to appeal to Dads: Both Lego and Mattel now offer construction toys. Procter & Gamble is developing special sections at big retailers as the company finds that women aren't as likely as before to choose personal care products for their husbands. The so-called "man aisle" organizes men's products in one place with shelf displays and even small TV monitors to help them pick out the appropriate items.[76]

OBJECTIVE 11-4
Word-of-mouth communication is the most important driver of product choice.

Word-of-Mouth Communication

Altoids breath mints have been around for 200 years, but the brand caught fire among a larger market only near the end of the 20th century. How did this happen? The revival began when the mint attracted a devoted following among smokers and coffee drinkers who hung out in the blossoming Seattle club scene during the 1980s. Until 1993, when Kraft bought manufacturer Callard & Bowser, only those "in the know" sucked the mints. The brand's marketing manager persuaded Kraft to hire advertising agency Leo Burnett to develop a modest promotional campaign. The agency decided to publicize the candy with subway posters sporting retro imagery and other "low tech" media to avoid making the product seem mainstream—that would turn off the original audience.[77] Young people started to tune into this "retro" treat, and its popularity skyrocketed.

As the Altoids success story illustrates, today grassroots efforts that motivate consumers to spread a brand's message are what makes a hit product. **Word-of-mouth (WOM)** is product information that individuals transmit to other individuals. Because we get the word from people we know, WOM tends to be more reliable and trustworthy than messages from more formal marketing channels. And, unlike advertising, WOM often comes with social pressure to conform to these recommendations.[78]

Despite the huge sums of money marketers pump into lavish ads, WOM is far more powerful: It influences up to 50 percent of all consumer goods sales.[79] If you

think carefully about the content of your own conversations in the course of a normal day, you will probably agree that much of what you discuss with friends, family members, or coworkers is product-related: When you compliment someone on her dress and ask her where she bought it, recommend a new restaurant to a friend, or complain to your neighbor about the shoddy treatment you got at the bank, you engage in WOM.

As far back as the Stone Age (well, the 1950s, anyway), communications theorists challenged the assumption that advertising primarily determines what we buy. As a rule, *advertising is more effective to reinforce our existing product preferences than to create new ones*.[80] Studies in both industrial and consumer purchase settings underscore the idea that although information from impersonal sources creates brand awareness, consumers rely on WOM in the later stages of evaluation and adoption.[81] Quite simply, the more positive information consumers get about a product from peers, the more likely they will be to adopt the product.[82]

WOM is especially powerful when the consumer is relatively unfamiliar with the product category. We often encounter these situations in the case of new products (e.g., medications to prevent hair loss) or those that are technologically complex (e.g., smartphones). One way to reduce uncertainty about the wisdom of a purchase is to talk about it. Talking gives the consumer an opportunity to generate supporting arguments for the purchase and to garner support for this decision from others. For example, the strongest predictor of a person's intention to buy a residential solar water heating system is the number of solar heat users the person knows.[83]

A lot of professionals, such as doctors, accountants, and lawyers, as well as services marketers like lawn-care companies and cleaning services, depend primarily on WOM to generate business. In many cases, consumers recommend a service provider to a friend or coworker, and in other cases businesspeople make recommendations to their customers. For example, only 0.2 percent of respondents in one study reported that they choose a physician based on advertising. Instead, they rely primarily on advice from family and friends.[84]

Buzz Building

In the "old days," here's how a toy company would launch a new product: Unveil a hot holiday toy during a spring trade fair, run a November–December saturation television ad campaign during cartoon prime time to plug the toy during Christmas season, sit back and watch as desperate parents scrambled through the aisles at (the now bankrupt) Toys "R" Us, and then wait for the resulting media coverage to drive still more sales.

Fast forward to a more recent toy story: A Hong Kong company called Silverlit Toys makes the $30 Picoo Z helicopter. At one point a Google search for the term *Picoo* produced more than 109,000 URLs, with many of those links pointed to major online global gift retailers like Hammacher Schlemmer and Toys "R" Us. Do you think this huge exposure was the result of a meticulously planned promotional strategy? Think again. By most accounts, a 28-year-old tech worker in Chicago started the Picoo Z buzz; he bought his helicopter after he read about it on a hobbyist message board. A few months later, he uploaded his homemade video of the toy on YouTube. Within two weeks, 15 of his friends had also bought the toy, and they in turn posted their own videos and pointed viewers to the original video. Internet retailers who troll online conversations for fresh and exciting buzz identified the toy and started to add their own links to the clips. Within a few short months, there were hundreds of Picoo Z videos and more than a million people viewed them.[85] The moral of the story: Stimulate WOM to build **buzz** around a product or service, then sit back and let your customers do the heavy lifting.

Negative WOM

We know that WOM is a powerful weapon; unfortunately it's a double-edged sword that cuts both ways for marketers. Informal discussions among consumers can make or break a product or store. Furthermore, consumers weigh **negative word-of-mouth** more heavily than they do positive comments. Especially when we consider a new product or service, we're likely to pay more attention to negative information than to positive information and to tell others about our nasty experience.[86] Research shows that negative WOM reduces the credibility of a firm's advertising and influences consumers' attitudes toward a product as well as their intention to buy it.[87] KFC recently sued several Chinese companies for allegedly spreading a false rumor that its chickens have six wings and eight legs. The company previously had to apologize for failing to inform consumers that some of its poultry suppliers used high levels of certain hormones to accelerate growth. So, this new unfounded rumor probably made sense to many people. After all, an eight-legged chicken would be more "efficient!"[88]

As we transmit information to one another, it tends to change. The resulting message usually does not resemble the original at all. The British psychologist Frederic Bartlett used the method of **serial reproduction** to examine how content mutates. Like the game of "telephone" many of us played as kids, he asked a subject to reproduce a stimulus, such as a drawing or a story. He then gave another subject this reproduction and asked him to copy it, and repeated this process several times. Figure 11.1 illustrates how a message changes as people reproduce it. Bartlett found that distortions almost inevitably follow a pattern: They tend to change from ambiguous forms to more conventional ones as subjects try to make them consistent with their preexisting schemas (see Chapter 3). He called this process *assimilation* and he noted that it often occurs as people engage in *leveling,* when they omit details to simplify the structure; or *sharpening,* when they exaggerate prominent details.

OBJECTIVE 11-5
Opinion leaders' recommendations are more influential than others' when we decide what to buy.

Opinion Leadership

As Cold Stone Creamery expands to Japan, the ice cream store projects a somewhat different image than it has in the United States. The chain wants to be ultracool as it generates a buzz among fashion-conscious "office ladies"—as the Japanese call young, single, female professionals. These women are influential in Japan; their reactions to a new product can make or break it. To woo this group, Cold Stone sponsored a fashion show for young women (assuming the models can fit into the dresses after sampling a few of the chain's caloric creations), and fashion magazines staged photo shoots at the stores.[89]

Although consumers get information from personal sources, they do not usually ask just *anyone* for advice about purchases. If you decide to buy a new stereo, you will most likely seek advice from a friend who knows a lot about sound systems. This friend may own a sophisticated system, or she may subscribe to specialized magazines such as *Stereo Review*, and spend her free time browsing through electronics stores. However, you may have another friend who has a reputation for being stylish and who spends his free time reading *Gentleman's Quarterly* and shopping at trendy boutiques. You might not bring up your stereo problem with him, but you may take him with you to shop for a new fall wardrobe.

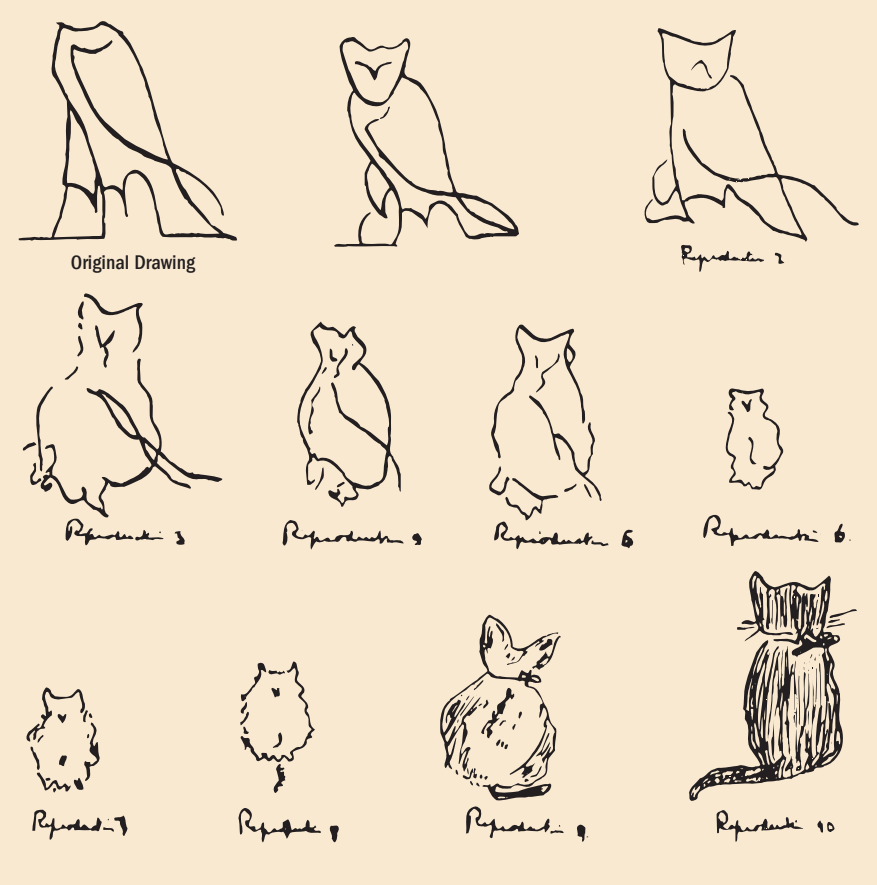


Figure 11.1 THE TRANSMISSION OF MISINFORMATION

Everyone knows people who are knowledgeable about products and whose advice others take seriously. These individuals, or **opinion leaders**, are frequently able to influence others' attitudes or behaviors.[90] Clearly, some people's recommendations carry more weight than others. Opinion leaders are extremely valuable information sources because they possess the social power we discussed earlier in the chapter:

- They are technically competent, so they possess expert power.[91]
- They prescreen, evaluate, and synthesize product information in an unbiased way, so they possess knowledge power.[92]
- They are socially active and highly interconnected in their communities.[93]
- They are likely to hold offices in community groups and clubs and to be active outside of the home. As a result, opinion leaders often wield legitimate power by virtue of their social standing.
- They tend to be similar to the consumer in terms of their values and beliefs, so they possess referent power. Note that although opinion leaders are set apart by their interest or expertise in a product category, they are more convincing to the extent that they are *homophilous* rather than *heterophilous*. **Homophily** refers to the degree to which a pair of individuals is similar in terms of education, social status, and beliefs.[94] Effective opinion leaders tend to be slightly higher in status and educational attainment than those they influence, but not so high as to be in a different social class.

- Opinion leaders are often among the first to buy new products, so they absorb much of the risk. This experience reduces uncertainty for the rest of us who are not as courageous. Furthermore, whereas company-sponsored communications tend to focus exclusively on the positive aspects of a product, the hands-on experience of opinion leaders makes them more likely to impart *both* positive and negative information about product performance. Thus, they are more credible because they have no "axe to grind."

How Influential Is an Opinion Leader?

Ford's prelaunch campaign for its crossover SUV Flex model aimed to get buzz going as it gave opinion leaders an exclusive look at the new car. In five cities, the company invited radio deejays, musicians, and other creative people to take a tour of the Flex. These influentials went on an urban odyssey as fleets of the vehicles took them to art galleries, nightclubs, and other hot spots. In a separate campaign to plug its Fiesta model, the carmaker selected 100 young people who got free use of a car for six months in return for blogging about it.[96]

When social scientists initially developed the concept of the opinion leader, they assumed that certain influential people in a community would exert an overall impact on group members' attitudes. Later work, however, questioned the assumption that there is such a thing as a *generalized opinion leader* whose recommendations we seek for all types of purchases. Few people are capable of being expert in a number of fields (even though they may believe otherwise). Sociologists distinguish between those who are *monomorphic*, or expert in a limited field, and those who are *polymorphic*, or expert in several fields.[97] Even opinion leaders who are polymorphic, however, tend to concentrate on one broad domain, such as electronics or fashion. For example, Mediamark Research & Intelligence estimates that 10.5 percent of the U.S. adult population, whom it labels "Big Circle Influentials," are the key influencers for personal finance decisions.[98]

A reexamination of the traditional perspective on opinion leadership reveals that the process isn't as clear-cut as some researchers thought.[99] The original framework is called the **two-step flow model of influence**. It proposes that a small group of *influencers* disseminates information because they can modify the opinions of a large number of other people.

When the authors ran extensive computer simulations of this process, they found that the influence is driven less by influentials and more by the interaction among those who are easily influenced; they communicate the information vigorously to one another and they also participate in a two-way dialogue with the opinion leader as part of an **influence network**. These conversations create **information cascades** that occur when a piece of information triggers a sequence of interactions (much like an avalanche). One study tracked, on an hourly basis, the rate at which 50 million Facebook users installed 2,700 apps. The researchers found clear evidence of an information cascade: Once an app was installed about 55 times in one day, its popularity took off. As Facebook friends got notified when someone installed the app, this feedback in turn prompted them to do it as well.[100]

It's not unusual for us to observe *herding behavior* among consumers as they blindly mimic what others in their group do. *Information cascades* can bias what people choose as they take their cues from what others select rather than choosing what they genuinely like. In a study that looked at how an individual's music preferences depend on knowing what other people choose, test subjects listened to 72 songs by new bands. A control group made their own individual judgments about which songs to select, but in other groups the participants could see how many

Marketing Pitfall

The power of opinion leaders is glaringly evident in the sports world, where the competition to persuade high-profile athletes and coaches to wear shoes and other merch is cutthroat. These rivalries can be a big problem in collegiate athletics, where budding stars are not supposed to accept compensation to endorse products. A recent scandal at The University of Louisville ended the coaching career of Rick Pitino, one of the most successful coaches in college basketball history. Pitino was caught up in a scheme to funnel money from the university's apparel partner, Adidas, to two high school prospects. According to prosecutors, the plan was for the teenage athletes to play for a university that had a sponsorship deal with the company and then sign sponsorship deals of their own with Adidas once they turned pro. The practice of getting coaches to outfit their players in a company's shoes dates back to 1977 when a Nike executive got several coaches to agree that in return for a fee their players would wear Nikes on the court.[95]

people downloaded particular songs. This feedback made a huge difference in what people chose. For example, if a song spiked early in the study and respondents could see a lot of people chose it, many more people jumped on the bandwagon and downloaded it as well. And it turns out these cascades occurred regardless of whether or not people genuinely liked the songs: The same thing happened when the subjects were given false information about which songs a lot of other people were downloading.[101] Round up the herd!

Types of Opinion Leaders

We've seen that early conceptions of the opinion leader role assumed a static, one-way process: The opinion leader absorbs information from the mass media and in turn transmits data to opinion receivers. This view also confuses the functions of several different types of consumers.

Opinion leaders may or may not be purchasers of the products they recommend. Early purchasers also tend to be *innovators*; they like to take risks and try new things. Researchers call opinion leaders who also are early purchasers *innovative communicators*. One study identified characteristics of college men who were innovative communicators for fashion products. These men were among the first to buy new fashions, and other students were likely to follow their lead when they made their own purchases. Other characteristics of the men included the following:[102]

- They were socially active.
- They were appearance conscious and narcissistic (i.e., they were quite fond of themselves and self-centered).
- They were involved in rock culture.
- They were heavy readers of magazines like *Playboy* and *Sports Illustrated*.
- They were likely to own more clothing, and a broader range of styles, than other students.

Opinion leaders also are likely to be *opinion seekers*. They are generally more involved in a product category and so they actively search for information. As a result, they are more likely to talk about products with others and to solicit others' opinions as well.[103] Contrary to the older, static view of opinion leadership, most product-related conversation does not take place in a "lecture" format where one person does all the talking. A lot of product-related conversation occurs in the context of a casual interaction rather than as formal instruction.[104]

The Market Maven

To publicize Clinical Therapy, a lotion brand from Vaseline, the company's advertising campaign mapped the social network of Kodiak, a small town in Alaska. Company reps took over a storefront and gave away free bottles of the product. In return, the recipients had to identify the person in town who recommended Clinical Therapy to them. Through this process they found a woman whom many of the townspeople named as their source.[105]

The Alaskan woman Vaseline found (no, she isn't former Governor Sarah Palin) is a **market maven**; she is a person who likes to transmit marketplace information of all types. These shopaholics are not necessarily interested in the products they recommend; they simply enjoy staying on top of what's happening in the marketplace. They come closer to the function of a generalized opinion leader because they tend to have a solid overall knowledge of how and where to procure products. They're also more confident in their own ability to make smart purchase decisions.

The Surrogate Consumer

In addition to everyday consumers who influence others' purchase decisions, a class of marketing intermediary we call the **surrogate consumer** often guides what we buy. This term refers to a third party we retain to provide input into our purchase decisions. Unlike the opinion leader or market maven, we usually compensate the surrogate for his or her advice. Interior decorators, stockbrokers, professional shoppers, and college admissions consultants are surrogate consumers.

Regardless of whether they actually make the purchase on behalf of the consumer, surrogate consumers can be enormously influential. The client essentially relinquishes control over several or all decision-making functions, such as information search, the evaluation of alternatives, or the actual purchase. For example, a client may commission an interior decorator to redo her house, and we may entrust a broker to make crucial buy/sell decisions on our behalf. Marketers tend to overlook surrogates when they try to convince consumers to buy their goods or services. This can be a big mistake, because they may mistarget their communications to end consumers when they should focus on the surrogates who actually sift through product information and recommend a purchase to their clients.[106]

Product Curators

Some smart marketers proactively seek out influencers to help them identify just what they should offer to their customers. When a museum decides to mount an exhibition on, say, Pop Art, it designates an expert, or curator, in the category to choose which pieces by Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and other artists it will show, and to create a narrative about why those particular paintings represent the genre. So too increasingly we see **product curators** who assemble merchandise on behalf of manufacturers or stores, such as Style Room by Zappos or AHALife that offers one-of-a-kind luxury products.[107] These experts (or in some cases, celebrities) often include recommendations about how to use the items and perhaps even share their stories about how they use them in their own lives. One difference from museum exhibitions: These items are all for sale!

One popular variation on this theme is the booming popularity of *subscription boxes*. In this business model, you pay a subscription fee (often monthly) to receive a package with a collection of products the provider chooses for you. Birchbox, Dollar Shave Club, Blue Apron (food), and even the designer brand Hermès cater to consumers' desires to be exposed to new products that have been chosen to complement their lifestyles. Now even Under Armour has gotten into the act with an ArmourBox that it chooses based upon a subscriber's workout routine.[108]

How Do We Find Opinion Leaders?

When PepsiCo launched its Sierra Mist Ruby Splash flavor, the company hired a firm to identify local people in different cities who could help it recruit a select group of "influencers." The requirements were specific: Influencers had to love lemon-lime beverages; be ages 18 to 34; and be musicians, skateboard shop owners, people who love to throw backyard barbeques, or others who had laid-back lifestyles and who were well-known in their communities. One influencer, for example, was a musician who hosted a backyard jam session for 20 friends; before the event, a crew dropped off ice-cold cans of the soft drink as well as branded sunglasses, misters, and car fresheners with a Ruby Splash scent. Another opinion leader owned a skateboard store; he hosted an outdoor movie night to debut a new surf film. In all, the company sponsored more than 300 of these mini-events in a two-month period. Nice job if you can get it.[109]



PepsiCo recruited "influencers" to spread the word when it launched a new Sierra Mist flavor. *Source:* Paul Sakuma/AP Images.

Unfortunately, because most opinion leaders are everyday consumers rather than celebrities, they are harder to find. A celebrity or an influential industry executive is by definition easy to locate. That person has national or at least regional visibility or has a listing in published directories or on social media. In contrast, opinion leaders tend to operate at the local level and they may influence only a small group of consumers rather than an entire market segment.

Self-Designation

The most commonly used technique to identify opinion leaders is simply to ask individual consumers whether they consider themselves to *be* opinion leaders. Figure 11.2 shows one of the measurement scales researchers use for this kind of self-designation.

Although respondents who report a greater degree of interest in a product category indeed are more likely to be opinion leaders, we must view the results of surveys that discover self-designated opinion leaders with some skepticism. Some people have a tendency to inflate their own importance and influence, whereas others who really are influential might not admit to this quality or be conscious of it if they are.[110] The fact that we transmit advice about products does not mean other people *take* that advice.

Sociometry: The Kevin Bacon Phenomenon

The play *Six Degrees of Separation* is based on the premise that everyone on the planet indirectly knows everyone else—or at least knows people who in turn know them. Indeed, social scientists estimate that the average person has 1,500 acquaintances and that five to six intermediaries can connect any two people in the United States.[111] A popular game called **Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon** challenges players to link the actor Kevin Bacon with other actors in much the same way.[112]

Sociometric methods trace communication patterns among members of a group. These techniques allow researchers to systematically map out the interactions among group members. Like the Vaseline campaign in Alaska we described previously, this means we interview consumers and find out who they ask for product

Please rate yourself on the following scales relating to your interactions with friends and neighbors regarding _____.

1. In general, do you talk to your friends and neighbors about _____:

very often				never
5	4	3	2	1

2. When you talk to your friends and neighbors about _____ do you:

give a great deal of information				give very little information
5	4	3	2	1

3. During the past six months, how many people have you told about a new _____?

told a number of people				told no one
5	4	3	2	1

4. Compared with your circle of friends, how likely are you to be asked about new _____?

very likely to be asked				not at all likely to be asked
5	4	3	2	1

5. In discussion of new _____, which of the following happens most?

you tell your friends about _____				your friends tell you about _____
5	4	3	2	1

6. Overall in all of your discussions with friends and neighbors are you:

often used as a source of advice				not used as a source of advice
5	4	3	2	1

Figure 11-2 OPINION LEADER SCALE

information. In many cases, one or a few people emerge as the "nodes" in a map—and *voilá*, we've found our opinion leaders. This method is the most precise, but it is difficult and expensive to implement because it involves close study of interaction patterns in small groups. For this reason, it's best to apply a sociometric technique in a closed, self-contained social setting, such as in hospitals, in prisons, and on military bases, where members are largely isolated from other social networks.

Sociometric techniques don't just look at who talks (or texts) to whom; they also consider the type of relationships among members of a social network. **Tie strength** refers to the nature of the bond between people. It can range from *strong primary* (e.g., a person's spouse) to *weak secondary* (e.g., an acquaintance whom you rarely see). Although strong ties are important, weak ties are as well because they perform a *bridging function*. This type of connection allows a consumer access between subgroups. For example, you might have a regular group of friends that is a primary reference group (strong ties). If you have an interest in tennis, one of these friends might introduce you to a group of people in her dorm who play on the tennis team. As a result, you gain access to their valuable expertise through this bridging function. This referral process demonstrates the **strength of weak ties**.

We use sociometric analyses to better understand *referral behavior* and to locate strengths and weaknesses in terms of how one's reputation flows through a community.[113] To understand how a network guides what we buy, consider a study researchers conducted among women who lived together in a sorority house. They found evidence that subgroups, or *cliques*, within the sorority were likely to share preferences for various products. In some cases, the sisters even shared their choices of "private" (i.e., socially inconspicuous) products (probably because of shared bathrooms in the sorority house).[114]

OBJECTIVE 11-6
Social media change the way we learn about and select products.

Social Media: The Horizontal Revolution

The odds are good that you've already accessed social media today. If you checked into your Facebook page (of course not during class!), fired off a tweet, read a restaurant review on Yelp, or maybe even killed off some nasty orcs on *World of Warcraft*, you're part of the social media revolution that is changing how consumers interact with the marketplace and with one another. Many of us love to share details about our lives that our parents probably would never discuss in public. Somehow events don't seem "official" until we post them: A change in relationship status on Facebook, a photo of a luscious restaurant appetizer on Instagram, a funky necklace pinned onto a Pinterest Board.

That's what we mean by a **horizontal revolution**. It's horizontal because communications no longer just flow top-down from companies and established media. They also flow across regular users via *social media*: The online means of communication, conveyance, collaboration, and cultivation among interconnected and interdependent networks of people, communities, and organizations enhanced by technological capabilities and mobility.[115]

Every day the influence of social media expands as more people join online communities. These include platforms like WhatsApp and Snapchat that offer **synchronous communications** (those that occur in real time, as when you text back and forth with a friend) and others such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn that offer **asynchronous communications** (those that don't require all participants to respond immediately, as when you text a friend and get an answer the next day). The odds are good (really, really good) that you use one or more of these platforms on a regular basis. After all, more than three-quarters of Americans aged 18 to 24 go to Snapchat daily, and the numbers are similar among all adults when we look at users of YouTube and Facebook.[116]



The colorful Starbucks "unicorn Frappuccino" became a "thing" (at least for awhile) because fans posted numerous photos of it on Instagram and other social media sites.
Source: Matt Rourke/AP Images.

But the exciting part of the story isn't that people are joining social communities. They are contributing too! Users upload 300 hours of video to YouTube every minute. In just 30 days on YouTube, more video is broadcast than in the past 60 years on the CBS, NBC, and ABC broadcasting networks combined.[117] Consider these mind-boggling social media stats:

- If you were paid $1 for every time an article was posted on Wikipedia, you would earn $156.23 per hour.
- It took radio 38 years to reach 50 million listeners. TV took 13 years to reach 50 million users. The internet took 4 years to reach 50 million people. In less than 9 months, Facebook added 100 million users.
- About 70 percent of Facebook users are outside the United States.
- Social networks have overtaken porn as the number-one online activity.
- Eighty percent of companies use LinkedIn as their primary recruiting tool.
- Twenty-five percent of search results for the world's top 10 brands are to user-generated content.
- People share more than 1.5 billion pieces of content on Facebook—*every* day.
- Eighty percent of Twitter usage is from mobile devices, and 17 percent of users have tweeted while on the toilet.

This is all exciting stuff, especially because social media platforms enable a **culture of participation**; a belief in democracy; the ability to freely interact with other people, companies, and organizations; open access to venues that allow users to share content from simple comments to reviews, ratings, photos, stories, and more; and the power to build on the content of others from your own unique point of view. Of course, just like democracy in the real world, we have to take the bitter with the sweet. There are plenty of unsavory things going on in cyberspace, and the hours people spend on Facebook, on online gambling sites, or in virtual worlds like *Second Life* have led to divorce, bankruptcy, or jail in the real world.

Sometimes people define social media in terms of hardware (like Samsung smartphones) or software (like Snapchat), but really it's first and foremost about **online community**: The collective participation of members who together build and maintain a site. Indeed, many of us become so enmeshed in our social networks that we feel the need to check them constantly to be sure we stay on top of what our (online) friends are up to 24/7 (oops, better stop reading this chapter and scan your Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram posts!). Do you know anyone like that?

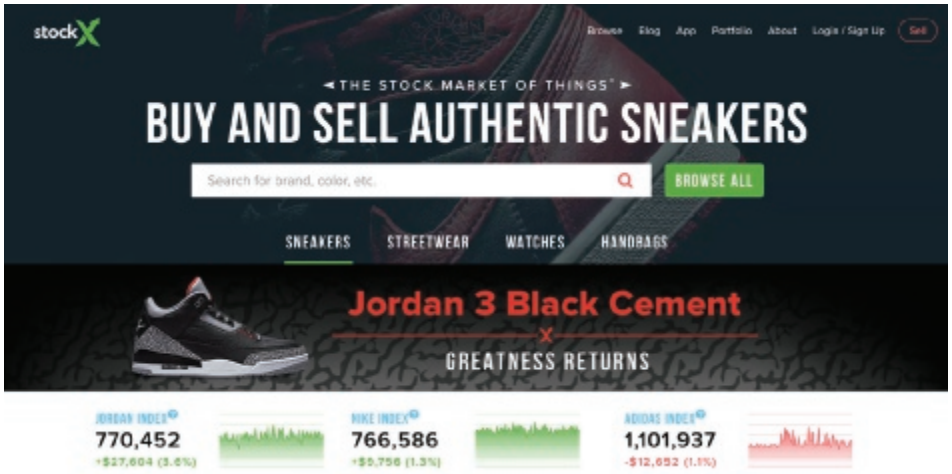
Some refer to this compulsion as **fear of missing out (FOMO)**. Certainly there are advantages to always feeling connected, but perhaps the downside is a vague feeling of regret or inadequacy that lurks in the background in case we chose not to be somewhere—or even worse, that we weren't invited in the first place![118] To compound the problem (or maybe to make you feel better?), FOMO usually is based upon a false perception that our friends' lives are so much more glam than our own. A recent study reported that 55 percent of college students assumed that their peers or classmates had more friends than they did. On average, students estimated that they spent 31 percent of their time alone, while their classmates spent only 22 percent of their time solo. Do you see the disconnect? Many people assume that others are better off socially, but those others feel the same! Since these (false) feelings of isolation can lead to addiction and depression, that's a problem.[119]

Online Social Networks and Brand Communities

Also, it's not all about businesses selling to consumers (**B2C e-commerce**). The cyberspace explosion has created a revolution in consumer-to-consumer activity (**C2C e-commerce**): Welcome to the world of *virtual brand communities*. Just as e-consumers are not limited to local retail outlets in their shopping, they are not limited to their local communities when they look for friends or fellow fans of wine, hip-hop, or skateboarding.

Picture a small group of local collectors who meet once a month at a local diner to discuss their shared interests over coffee. Now multiply that group by thousands and include people from all over the world who are united by a shared passion for sports memorabilia, Barbie dolls, Harley-Davidson motorcycles, refrigerator magnets, or massive multiplayer online games (MMOGs) such as *World of Warcraft*. The web also provides an easy way for consumers around the world to exchange information about their experiences with products, services, music, restaurants, and movies. The Hollywood Stock Exchange (hsx.com) offers a simulated entertainment stock market where traders predict the four-week box office take for each film.[120] Amazon.com encourages shoppers to write reviews of books, and (just as Gail did way back in Chapter 1) you can even rate your professors at RateMyProfessors .com (don't tell your prof about this one; it'll be our secret).[121] The popularity of chat rooms where consumers can go to discuss various topics with like-minded "Netizens" around the world grows every day. News reports tell us of the sometimes wonderful and sometimes horrific romances that have begun on the internet as people check out potential mates on sites such as Match.com or OKCupid. Today about one in five heterosexual couples met online, and the percentage for same-sex couples zooms to almost 70 percent.[122]

Let's take a closer look at the underlying fabric of social media. Each online platform, such as Facebook, Pinterest, or Twitter, consists of a **social network**, a set of socially relevant nodes connected by one or more relations.[123] **Nodes** are members of the network (e.g., the more than one billion Facebook users) who are connected to one another. Ties stem from affiliations, such as kinship, friendship and affective bonds, shared experiences, and common hobbies and interests. When we think of community, we tend to think of people, but in principle, members of a network can be organizations, articles, countries, departments in a company, or any other definable unit. A good example is your university alumni association.



The new StockX trading platform allows members of brand communities built around collectibles like vintage sneakers to connect with one another.
Source: Image Courtesy of StockX.



Today, it seems that "everyone" is on Facebook—including parents.
Source: Courtesy of Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A., Inc.

The association is a community of networked individuals and organizations. Social networks are sometimes called **social graphs**, though this term may also refer to a diagram of the interconnections of units in a network.

Flows occur between nodes. Flows are exchanges of resources, information, or influence among members of the network. On Facebook you share news, updates about your life, opinions on your favorite books and movies, photos, videos, and notes. As you share content, you create flows from among those in your network. In social media, these flows of communication go in many directions at any point in time and often on multiple platforms—a condition we term **media multiplexity**. Flows are not simply two-way or three-way; they may go through an entire community, a list or group within a network, or several individuals independently. For marketers, flows are especially important because they are the actionable components of

any social network system in terms of the sharing of information, delivery of promotional materials, and sources of social influence.

Successful online communities possess several important characteristics:

- **Standards of behavior:** Rules that specify what members can and can't do on the site. Some of these rules are spelled out explicitly (e.g., if you buy an item on eBay, you agree that you have entered into a legal contract to pay for it), but many of them are unspoken. A simple example is discouragement of the practice of **flaming** when a POST CONTAINS ALL CAPITAL LETTERS TO EXPRESS ANGER.
- **Member contributions:** A healthy proportion of users need to contribute content. If not, the site will fail to offer fresh material and ultimately traffic will slow. Participation can be a challenge, though. Remember the *80/20 rule* we discussed way back in Chapter 1? It applies to online consumption as well. The fact is that most members of an online community are **lurkers**. That's kind of a creepy term, but it just means they absorb content that others post rather than contributing their own. Researchers estimate that only 1 percent of a typical community's users regularly participate, and another 9 percent do so only intermittently. The remaining 90 percent just observe what's on the site. Although they don't contribute content, they do offer value to advertisers that simply want to reach large numbers of people.
- But what happens when we want to engage consumers more actively? How can a site convert lurkers into active users? The easier it is to participate, the more likely it is that the community can generate activity among a larger proportion of visitors. In part, this means ensuring that there are several ways to participate that vary in ease of use. Facebook is an example of an online community that has figured out how to offer several forms of participation. Members can post status updates (easy), make comments, upload pictures, share notes and links, play social games, answer quizzes, decorate their profiles, upload videos, and create events (a bit harder), among other forms of participation.
- **Degree of connectedness:** Powerful groups are cohesive; this means the members identify strongly with them and are highly motivated to stay connected. Online groups may be even more cohesive than physical groups, even though many of the members will never meet one another in person. For example, compared to the "six degrees of separation" norm we discussed, researchers estimate that Facebook's members on average have only four degrees of separation from each other. Although some users have designated only one friend and others have thousands, the median is about 100 friends. The researchers found that most pairs of Facebook users could be connected through four intermediate users, and this number shrank to three within a single country.[124] Because many of us devote so much time and energy to our online group relationships, connectedness also reflects our real world relationships (it's common for people to learn that their partner has broken up with them only after they see a change in "relationship status" on Facebook!). One study that analyzed 1.3 million Facebook users and about 8.6 billion links among them reported that couples who are in a relationship are more likely to stay together if they share a lot of mutual Facebook friends, and they're more likely to break up within a few months if this indicator dips sharply because it implies their social lives aren't overlapping much.[125]
- **Network effects:** The quality of the site improves as the number of users increases. For example, Amazon's ability to recommend books to you based on what other people with similar interests buy gets better as it tracks more and more people who enter search queries.

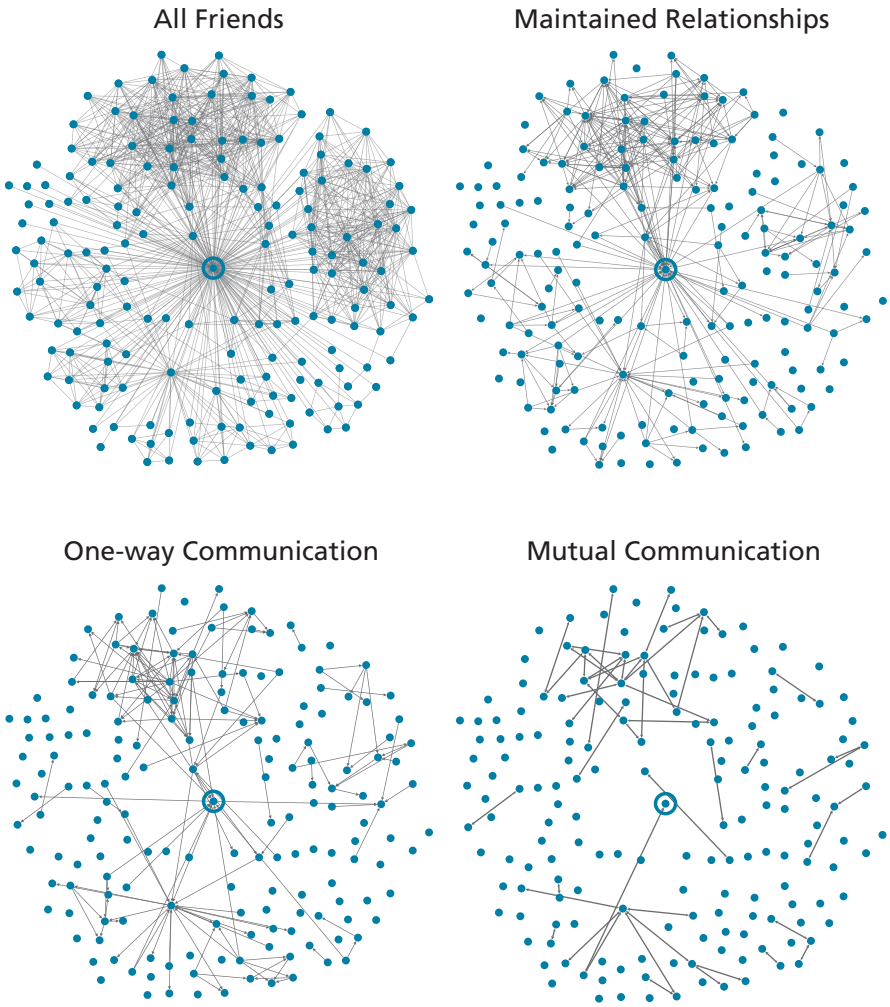


Figure 11-3 A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF ONE PERSON'S NETWORK NEIGHBORHOOD ON FACEBOOK.
Source: Courtesy of Dr. Cameron Marlow, Stanford University.

Social Games

A **social game** is a multiplayer, competitive, goal-oriented activity with defined rules of engagement and online connectivity among a community of players. Successful mobile games such as *Candy Crush* and *Angry Birds* boast millions of avid followers.[126] These applications usually incorporate one or more elements of game design, such as **leaderboards** that indicate how each player is doing relative to others in the game and **badges** that show the community the challenges the player has mastered so far.

Social games are built on several layers, including platform, mode, milieu, and genre.[127] Let's briefly review the basic dimensions of social games:

- A **game platform** refers to the hardware systems on which the game is played. Platforms include *game consoles* (consoles are interactive, electronic devices used to display video games, such as Sony's PlayStation3, Microsoft's Xbox 360, and Nintendo's Wii), computers (including both online games and those that require software installation on the player's computer hard drive), and portable devices that may include smartphones or devices specifically for game play such as the Sony PSP or Nintendo DS.[128]

- **Mode** refers to the way players experience the game world. It includes aspects such as whether a player's activities are highly structured, whether the game is single-player or multiplayer, whether the game is played in close physical proximity to other players (or by virtual proximity), and whether the game is real-time or turn-based.
- **Milieu** describes the visual nature of the game, such as science fiction, fantasy, horror, and retro.
- The **genre** of a game refers to the method of play. Popular genres include simulation, action, and role-playing. *Simulation games* depict real-world situations as accurately as possible. There are several subgenres, including racing simulators, flight simulators, and "Sim" games that enable players to simulate the development of an environment. Among social games, simulations include the highly popular *FarmVille*, *Pet Resort*, and *FishVille*. Action games consist of two major subgenres: *first-person shooters (FPS)*, where you "see" the game as your avatar sees it, and third-person games. In *role-playing games* (RPGs), the players play a character role with the goal of completing some mission. Perhaps the best-known RPG started its life as a tabletop game: *Dungeons and Dragons*. Players adopt the identity of a character in the game story and go about completing tasks and collecting points and items as they strive to accomplish the intended goal.

Digital Word-of-Mouth

There's little doubt that video content is what will drive the online marketing world from now on. **Viral marketing** occurs when an organization motivates visitors to forward online content to their friends; the message quickly spreads much like a cold virus moves among residents of a dorm. It usually takes off when the online content is entertaining or just plain weird. This strategy stirred up a huge amount of interest in "lap giraffes," for example. Thousands of people started to look for these cuddly pets after an online message circulated about them. One hitch: There is no such thing as a lap giraffe. The scam was part of a marketing campaign for the cable provider DirecTV. More than half a million people put their names on a waiting list to receive one of the tiny animals. Presumably they're still waiting to get their new pets delivered.[131]

Net Profit

MMORPGs—*massive multiplayer online role-playing games*—truly encompass the social aspects of gaming. *World of Warcraft* is one of the largest MMORPGs with millions of players from around the world; other popular ones include *Haven* and *The Sims*.[129] The money people spend in virtual worlds like these grows rapidly. Indeed, **digital virtual consumption (DVC)** may well be the next frontier of marketing. Consumers worldwide spend well more than $80 billion per year (yes, billion) to buy **virtual goods** for their online characters.[130] Thousands of in-world residents design, create, and purchase clothing, furniture, houses, vehicles, and other products their avatars need, and many do it in style as they acquire the kind of "bling" they can only dream about in real life. Some forward-thinking marketers understand that these platforms are the next stage they can use to introduce their products into people's lives, whether real or virtual. Today, for example, people who play *The Sims* can import actual pieces of furniture from IKEA into their virtual homes.



World of Warcraft is one of the largest MMORPGs with millions of players from around the world.
Source: Bloomberg/Getty Images.

Smart marketers do whatever they can to encourage the use of video WOM for their products. For example, Amazon (they're pretty smart) introduced a video review system to keep shoppers engaged when they shop on its website. The e-commerce giant knows that about half of consumers search for product videos before they visit a store, and shoppers are 1.8 times more likely to buy something if they've viewed a video on a product page. Amazon also patented a content-based price reduction system, which decreases an item's price according to how much ad-filled video content a shopper consumes on the product page.[132]

More generally, the strategy called **content marketing** (or sometimes *native advertising*) draws its lifeblood from online video. This term refers to " . . . a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience—and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action."[133] In English: Drive customers to your site by providing value in the form of entertaining or educational material rather than pulling people in kicking and screaming by just throwing ads at them.

There's no doubt many of us love to share the news with others; news about new styles, new music, and especially new stuff that we've bought. Of course we do this in the form of online reviews in forums like Yelp or TripAdvisor. However, the urge to share even creates new genres of communication such as **haul videos** that feature a proud *fashionista* describing clothing items she just bought, and **unboxing videos** that illustrate in painstaking detail exactly how to remove electronics products from their boxes and assemble them for use (if you don't believe it, google these terms!).

Why Do We Post?

The viral marketing explosion highlights the power of the **Megaphone Effect**. Web 2.0 makes a huge audience available to everyday consumers. Some fashion bloggers build an impressive following as they share their views about what's hot and what's not. For example, more than 30,000 people read this post:

> Found the perfect gray socks while shopping at Uniqlo in Tokyo with my mom/favorite shopping partner (she's always down to stop randomly to eat and shares my love for finding wearable things in unlikely places). Vaguely sheer and just the right length. This sounds extremely trivial, and sort of is, but I've been looking for something like them forever now.[134]

Researchers report that communication about brands is more likely to include mentions of interesting or unusual brands, and the motivation to post about these items is driven to a greater extent by the desire for self-enhancement. When people share their opinions about products with their social networks, they may do so to satisfy one of several goals: To manage the impression they make on others, to regulate emotions by expressing affective reactions, to share and acquire information, to bond with others, and to persuade others to change their opinions.[135]

Unlike a spontaneous conversation in the physical world, when consumers write about products they have more time to think strategically about what they're saying—and about how these judgments reflect on them.[136] Indeed, much of what we post is actually about ourselves; one study reported that 80 percent of tweets people send focus on themselves rather than other topics.[137]

A study that analyzed Twitter data illustrates the care people take to portray themselves in a positive light, but to avoid acting like they're bragging when they tweet about products they've bought or experienced. When the researchers looked at posts regarding two luxury brands—Louis Vuitton and Mercedes—they found that people commonly mention these items "in passing" as they comment on what

they're doing or feeling at the moment, or even try to downplay the brand's positive characteristics to avoid looking too snobbish.[138]

Other researchers identified a somewhat similar phenomenon they call the **Dispreferred Marker Effect**. Online posts that are really negative may make the writer look harsh and judgmental, so people sometimes soften them by couching them in *dispreferred markers*, including phrases such as, "I'll be honest," "God bless it," or "I don't want to be mean, but . . . " Sure enough, readers of these kinds of posts evaluated the writer more positively than they did posters who just laid out the bad news, warts and all.[139]

Influencer Marketing

As we saw in our earlier discussion, you don't have to be a Kylie Jenner or Kanye West to be an opinion leader—but it helps. The impact of online recommendations by celebrities or even by "micro-celebrities" who become famous for a short time because people value their expertise is transforming marketing communications strategies as companies scramble to embrace the **influencer marketing** model. Indeed, a recent survey reported that 84 percent of marketers plan to execute at least one influencer marketing campaign during the next 12 months.

The influencer marketing model basically replicates the "cool kid" phenomenon we all experienced in high school. He or she runs with the popular kids (unless you're one of them, don't try to eat at their lunch table!). The cool kid sets the standard that others then imitate. Now imagine that cool kid is online so that millions of the rest of us can find out exactly what she or he is wearing, listening to, and so on. So, for example, Kylie Jenner partnered with the Fashion Nova clothing brand to promote the company. One Instagram post of her wearing the jeans earned 2.2 million likes! Another factor (other than wanting to emulate the cool kid) that makes influence marketing so powerful: About half of American consumers use ad blockers on their social media, so traditional messages just don't get through like they used to.[140]

The power of this approach explains why bloggers have become such important online opinion leaders. Consumers perceive bloggers (or vloggers, since many of the successful ones post their comments on video) as the third most trustworthy source of information after friends and family. So it's not surprising that marketers are intent on finding these people and getting on their good sides. For example, Marc Jacobs launched a #castmemarc campaign to recruit beauty bloggers the company would feature in a how-to video series. Over 100,000 aspiring beauty buffs applied, and the luxury brand picked five winners.[141]

Previously we saw that opinion leaders are people who are more influential than most when they recommend purchases to others. In online groups, opinion leaders sometimes are called **power users**. They have a strong communications network that gives them the ability to affect purchase decisions for a number of other consumers, directly and indirectly.[142]

Much like their offline counterparts, power users are active participants at work and in their communities. Their social networks are large and well developed. Others trust them and find them to be credible sources of information about one or more specific topics. They tend to have a natural sense of intellectual curiosity, which may lead them to new sources of information. And they post an awful lot of brand-related content: Forrester Research has dubbed these brand-specific mentions **influence impressions**. In advertising lingo, an *impression* refers to a view or an exposure to an advertising message. Forrester estimates that, each year, U.S. consumers generate 256 billion influence impressions as people talk about their lives with each other, telling stories and experiences that invariably include brands.[143] These influence impressions are primarily delivered by—you guessed it—power users: Only 6.2 percent of social media users are responsible for about 80 percent of these brand mentions. Forrester calls these influencers **mass connectors**.

MyLab Marketing

Visit www.pearson.com/mylab/marketing for Marketing Metrics questions available only in MyLab Marketing.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. **Other people and groups, especially those that possess social power, influence our decisions.**

   We belong to or admire many different groups, and a desire for them to accept us often drives our purchase decisions. Individuals or groups whose opinions or behavior are particularly important to consumers are reference groups. Both formal and informal groups influence the individual's purchase decisions, although such factors as the conspicuousness of the product and the relevance of the reference group for a particular purchase determine how influential the reference group is.

   Individuals have influence in a group to the extent that they possess social power. Types of social power include information power, referent power, legitimate power, expert power, reward power, and coercive power.

   Brand communities unite consumers who share a common passion for a product. Brandfests, which companies organize to encourage this kind of community, can build brand loyalty and reinforce group membership.

   We conform to the desires of others for two basic reasons: (1) People who model their behavior after others because they take others' behavior as evidence of the correct way to act are conforming because of informational social influence; and (2) those who conform to satisfy the expectations of others or to be accepted by the group are affected by normative social influence. Group members often do things they would not do as individuals because their identities become merged with the group; they become deindividuated.

2. **Marketers often need to understand consumers' behavior rather than a consumer's behavior.**

   More than one person actually makes many purchasing decisions. Collective decision making occurs whenever two or more people evaluate, select, or use a product or service. In organizations and in families, members play several different roles during the decision-making process. These roles include gatekeeper, influencer, buyer, and user.

3. **The decision-making process differs when people choose what to buy on behalf of an organization rather than for personal use.**

   Organizational buyers are people who make purchasing decisions on behalf of a company or other group. Although many of the same factors that affect how they make decisions in their personal lives influence these buyers, their organizational choices tend to be more rational. Their decisions are also likely to involve more financial risk, and as the choices become more complex, it is probable that a greater number of people will be involved in making the decision. The amount of cognitive effort that goes into organizational decisions relates to internal factors, such as the individuals' psychological characteristics, and external factors, such as the company's willingness to tolerate risk. One of the most important determinants is the type of purchase the company wants to make: The extent of problem-solving required depends on whether the product or service it procures is simply a reorder (a straight rebuy), a reorder with minor modifications (modified rebuy), or something it has never bought before or something complex and risky (new task). Online purchasing sites revolutionize the way organizational decision makers collect and evaluate product information in business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce.

4. **Members of a family unit play different roles and have different amounts of influence when the family makes purchase decisions.**

   Marketers have to understand how families make decisions. Spouses in particular have different priorities and exert varying amounts of influence in terms of effort and power. Women who work outside the home tend to command more power in purchasing decisions, but, on the other hand, the significant growth in the number of stay-at-home fathers also influences this dynamic.

5. Word-of-mouth communication is the most important driver of product choice.

Much of what we know about products we learn through word-of-mouth (WOM) communication rather than formal advertising. We tend to exchange product-related information in casual conversations. Although WOM often is helpful to make consumers aware of products, it can also hurt companies when damaging product rumors or negative WOM occur.

6. Opinion leaders' recommendations are more influential than others when we decide what to buy.

Opinion leaders who are knowledgeable about a product and whose opinions are highly regarded tend to influence others' choices. Specific opinion leaders are somewhat hard to identify, but marketers who know their general characteristics can try to target them in their media and promotional strategies. Other influencers include market mavens, who have a general interest in marketplace activities; and surrogate consumers, who are compensated for their advice about purchases.

7. Social media changes the way we learn about and select products.

Social media platforms significantly increase our access to others' opinions about products and services. Virtual consumption communities unite those who share a common passion for products that include apparel, cars, music, beer, political candidates, etc. Many social media users post content online that satisfies the motive for self-enhancement as well as the desire to share opinions and experiences about products and services. Consumers may engage with these brands via social games. Viral marketing techniques enlist individuals to spread online WOM about brands. Online opinion leaders play a pivotal role in disseminating influential recommendations and product information.

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REVIEW

11-1 What is word-of-mouth, and how can it be more powerful than advertising?

11-2 Which is more powerful: positive or negative word-of-mouth?

11-3 Describe some ways in which marketers use the internet to encourage positive word-of-mouth.

11-4 What is viral marketing? Give an example of this strategy.

11-5 What is an opinion leader? Give three reasons why they are powerful influences on consumers' opinions.

11-6 Is there such a thing as a generalized opinion leader? Why or why not?

11-7 What is the relationship between an opinion leader and an opinion seeker?

11-8 What is the difference between a market maven and a surrogate consumer?

11-9 What are sociometric techniques? Under what conditions does it make sense to use them?

11-10 List three types of social power, and give an example of each.

11-11 What is a brand community, and why is it of interest to marketers?

11-12 Define conformity and give an example of it. Name three reasons why people conform.

11-13 How does the Principle of Least Interest relate to your success in a romantic relationship?

11-14 How does knowing what you now know about B2B decisions change the way you might approach a marketing campaign to influence the members of a buying center?

11-15 What are some factors that influence how an organizational buyer evaluates a purchase decision?

11-16 What is a prediction market?

11-17 Summarize the buyclass model of purchasing. How do decisions differ within each class?

11-18 What are some of the ways in which organizational decisions differ from individual consumer decisions? How are they similar?

11-19 List three roles employees play in the organizational decision-making process.

11-20 What is the difference between an autonomic and a syncretic decision?

11-21 What are some differences between "traditional" and "modern" couples in terms of how they allocate household responsibilities?

11-22 What is a kin-network system?

11-23 Describe a heuristic a couple might use when they make a decision, and provide an example of it.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

11-24 Industrial purchase decisions are totally rational. Aesthetic or subjective factors don't—and shouldn't—play a role in this process. Do you agree?

11-25 We can think of college students who live away from home as having a substitute "family." Whether you live with your parents, with a spouse, or with other students, how are decisions made in your college residence "family"? Do some people take on the role of mother, father, or child? Give a specific example of a decision that had to be made and the roles members played.

11-26 Does constant checking of what your network posts lead to FOMO? How might social media platforms combat the potential to cause depression among users?

11-27 A recent sociometric study on obesity (similar to the one we read regarding clusters of smokers) provides a striking example of how our social networks influence what we do. The researchers analyzed a sample of more than 12,000 people who participated in the Framingham Heart Study, which closely documented their health from 1971 to 2003. They discovered that obesity can spread from person to person, much like a virus. The investigators knew who was friends with whom, as well as who was a spouse or sibling or neighbor, and they knew how much each person weighed at various times over three decades so they could reconstruct what happened over the years if study participants became obese. Guess what? When one person gains weight, close friends tend to gain weight, too. A person's chances of becoming obese if a close friend put on the pounds increased by 57 percent! The friend's influence remained even if he or she lived hundreds of miles away. The researchers speculated that the reason for this *social contagion* effect is that when our best buds get fat, this alters our perception of normal body weight so we aren't as concerned when we put on a few pounds as well.[144]

How does social contagion work in your life?

11-28 The average U.S. teenager spends well more than eight hours a day in front of a screen, whether smartphone, PC, TV, or tablet. One study reported increasing physical isolation among internet users; it created a controversy and drew angry complaints from some users who insisted that time they spent online did not detract from their social relationships. However, the researchers said they had now gathered further evidence showing that internet use has lowered the amount of time people spend socializing with friends and even sleeping. According to the study, an hour of time spent using the internet reduces face-to-face contact with friends, coworkers, and family by 23.5 minutes; lowers the amount of time spent watching television by 10 minutes; and reduces sleep time by 8.5 minutes.[145]

What's your perspective on this issue? Does increasing use of the internet have positive or negative implications for interpersonal relationships in our society?

11-29 A *consumer tribe* is similar to a brand community; it is a group of people who share a lifestyle and can identify with each other because of a shared allegiance to an activity or a product. Although these tribes are often unstable and short lived, at least for a time members identify with others through shared emotions, moral beliefs, styles of life, and of course the products they jointly consume as part of their tribal affiliation.

Some companies, especially those that are more youth-oriented, use a *tribal marketing strategy* that links their product to, say, a group of shredders. However, there also are plenty of tribes with older members, such as car enthusiasts who gather to celebrate cult products like the Citroën in Europe and the Ford Mustang in the United States, or "foodies" who share their passion for cooking with other Wolfgang Puck wannabes around the world.[146]

Identify and visit a tribal festival in your area (e.g., a comic book convention, a rock concert, a basketball tournament, a vegan food show, and so on). What role do marketers play in this event? How and to what extent do attendees identify with other "tribal" members?

11-30 The chapter discusses a scandal involving college basketball coaches who get paid by a company to require their players to wear its products. Should college players be allowed to accept their own endorsement deals?

11-31 Walmart contended with a widespread text-messaging hoax that warned women to stay away from its stores or risk death. The digital rumor apparently originated in an *urban myth* (an unsubstantiated "fact" that many people accept as true) that circulated via email several years ago. As a reflection of how widespread this myth became, at one point Walmart was number five on Twitter's list of trending topics.[147] If you were a Walmart communications executive, how might you deal with this kind of public relations nightmare?

11-32 The strategy of viral marketing gets customers to sell a product to other customers on behalf of the company. That often means convincing your friends to climb on the bandwagon, and sometimes you get a cut if they buy something.[148] Some might argue that that means you're selling out your friends (or at least selling to your friends) in exchange for a piece of the action. Others might say you're simply sharing the wealth with your buddies. Have you ever passed along names of your friends to a company or website? If so, what happened? How do you feel about this practice?

▶ APPLY

11-33 Identify fashion opinion leaders on your campus. Do they fit the profile the chapter describes?

11-34 A study on antibranding documented hostility among consumers who object to the gas-guzzling Hummer vehicle. One driver posted this message: "The H2 is a death machine. You'd better hope that you don't collide with an H2 in your economy car. You can kiss your ass goodbye thanks to the H2's massive weight and raised bumpers. Too bad you couldn't afford an urban assault vehicle of your own."[149]

Identify an antibranding site for another product. What functions do the site seem to serve? How can people who participate there be considered part of a community?

11-35 Arrange to interview two married couples, one married fewer than five years and one married for more than 20 years. Prepare a response form that lists five product categories—groceries, furniture, appliances, vacations, and automobiles—and ask each spouse to indicate, without consulting the other, whether purchases in each category are made by joint or unilateral decisions, and to indicate whether the unilateral decisions are made by the husband or the wife. Compare each couple's responses for agreement between husbands and wives relative to who makes the decisions, and compare both couples' overall responses for differences relative to the number of joint versus unilateral decisions. Report your findings and conclusions.

11-36 More than 16 million millennial women are now mothers, and that number grows by more than a million every year. These new parents demand innovations in child-rearing to match their experiences in other realms of their lives. These "parennials" are information-hungry; they never stop researching the best things to buy for their children. There are numerous resources for them to learn about parenting, such as chat rooms like Wonder Weeks and WebMDBaby. Many parennials, accustomed to chronicling every great dish they ordered in a restaurant, give their children YouTube channels from the first sonogram and hashtags when they're born.[150] What is the next "killer app" for young parennials?

11-37 Conduct a sociometric analysis within your dormitory or neighborhood. For a product category such as music or cars, ask each individual to identify other individuals with whom he or she shares information. Systematically trace all of these avenues of communication, and identify opinion leaders by locating individuals whom others say provide helpful information.

11-38 Trace a referral pattern for a service provider such as a hair stylist; track how clients came to choose him or her. See if you can identify opinion leaders who are responsible for referring several clients to the businessperson. How might the service provider take advantage of this process to grow his or her business?

11-39 The power of unspoken social norms often becomes obvious only when we violate them. To witness this result firsthand, try one of the following: Stand facing the back wall in an elevator, serve dessert before the main course, offer to pay cash for dinner at a friend's home, wear pajamas to class, or tell someone *not* to have a nice day.

11-40 Identify a set of avoidance groups for your peers. Can you identify any consumption decisions that you and your friends make with these groups in mind?

11-41 Several colleges have sponsored "social media detox" events. Students at Saint Mary's College of California were challenged to "Disconnect, Power Off and Unplug" in order to rediscover "The Lost Art of Solitude;" no internet for a month! The library at Wake Forest University created a "ZieSta Room" where technology is banned.[151]

Do a "detox" of your own for 48 hours. No cellphones. No Facebook. No social media of any kind. Keep a diary of your experiences.

CASE STUDY

Never Stay Here! The Power of Negative Online Reviews

If you book a hotel for your next vacation, you will likely view ratings from online opinion leader TripAdvisor. As the world's largest travel site, TripAdvisor has integrated their review system with over 500 major travel partners including online booking site Kayak and leading hotel chains Wyndham, Best Western, and Four Seasons.[153,154] The site has over 600 million reviews and opinions of accommodations, airlines, experiences, and restaurants in every country in the world. 1.2 million of the reviews are for hotels, inns, B&Bs, and specialty lodging, and even more—46 million—are for restaurants.[155,156] 280 reviews and opinions are added every minute![157]

How important are online reviews? Very important, it seems, to both travelers and to the hotels and other services being reviewed. As a Cornell University study done by the Center for Hospitality Research noted, it was 2010 when social media really took over the travel industry. This was the first year in which "guest experience mentioned in customer reviews" became the factor that surveyed consumers reported had most influenced their hotel choice. Today, TripAdvisor reviews can turn obscure hotels into sold-out sensations, save travelers from vacation disasters, and even change the hospitality standards of entire nations.[158]

The value of TripAdvisor reviews rests largely on their perceived trustworthiness. Researchers have found that consumers put a high level of trust in online reviews of products and services.[159] One study found that 59 percent of consumers said online reviews were as trustworthy as a friend's recommendation; in another, that number was 84 percent.[160] Another key finding was that four out of five consumers have changed their minds about a recommended purchase based solely on negative information they found online.[161]

Since online reviews are important, the challenge to marketers is how to manage the reviews, especially the dreaded negative reviews. Everyone knows all reviews cannot be positive, but there are ones that strike a chord of fear for hospitality companies: bed bugs, dirty sheets, discourteous front desk staff, and so on. The question for every hotel is, how do we respond to negative reviews?

There are several options for handling negative reviews. Obviously, the first option is to do nothing at all, and many hotels go this route. The small-hotel owner is incredibly busy, so following up on and responding to online reviews may be low on his or her list of daily priorities. Perhaps these owners are not social media savvy or they are unaware of social media monitoring tools that will make tracking and responding to comments easier. Some of the more sophisticated monitoring tools are expensive, costing as much as $2,400 a month.[162]

Still, most marketers agree that listening and responding to negative reviews is the best strategy. TripAdvisor says that hotel owners think of its service as a marketing platform; they find value in the feedback even if it's negative.[163] One TripAdvisor member referred to it as a "built-in focus group, helping us make decisions on how to improve our services and facilities year after year."[164] A TripAdvisor study found that owners who are willing to respond to online comments are more likely to get booking inquiries.[165]

At several hotel chains, including Red Roof Inns, local managers regularly respond to negative online reviews.[166] The responses themselves can be tricky; what do you say? It's clear that the overall goal of the response is to satisfy the reviewer and to change the public perception of your property. If the reviewer appears incorrect, how can the hotel politely attempt to correct the information without insulting the reviewer or creating an online argument?

If a reviewer has a truly bad experience, many hotels consider the guest deserving of a discount or free night at the hotel. But hotels must be careful not to publicly promote this reward, or less ethical reviewers might intentionally write bad reviews in the hope of getting free nights at the hotel.

TripAdvisor has features to help hotels with some of these obstacles. The hotel can send a private message via the TripAdvisor message system that apologizes and explains their plan for improvement.[167] If the hotel feels a review is incorrect, there is an opportunity to report the review as inappropriate to TripAdvisor and request removal or correction.[168]

Some businesses have taken more extreme actions in response to negative reviews. There are a few reports of hotels fining their customers as much as $500 for a bad review. The customer is warned in the fine print of the contract and hotels deduct the fee from the credit card used at check-in.[169] Some small businesses have even sued customers for defamation in their online reviews.[170]

Online reviews are important for business survival and revenue growth. One study revealed that a one-star increase in a Yelp rating can lead to as much as a 9 percent increase in revenue.[171] Another Cornell University study found that for every increased point in reputation rating (TripAdvisor's 1 to 5 scale), hotels can increase prices by 11 percent and not lose business.[172]

In the competitive world of hotel marketing, it's clear that social media marketing and visitor review sites will continue to influence travelers' decisions and must be taken seriously.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 11-1 How comfortable should consumers be in letting the reviews of others influence where and how they travel? What are the pros and cons?

CS 11-2 What steps do you recommend a hotel take when dealing with a negative online review? Try to find one example of a hotel that has done a good job of responding to a negative review.

CS 11-3 Review the concept of the *wisdom of crowds* discussed in this chapter. How does this perspective apply to Travelocity hotel reviews? Which do you trust more: the reviews of fellow travelers or the opinions of travel "experts"? Explain your choice.

MyLab Marketing

If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

11-42 Although social networking is red hot, could its days be numbered? Many people have concerns about privacy issues. Others feel that platforms such as Facebook are too overwhelming. As one media executive comments, "Nobody has 5,000 real friends. At the end of the day it just becomes one big cauldron of noise." What's your stand on this: Can we have too much of a good thing? Will people start to tune out all of these networks?[152]

11-43 The adoption of a certain brand of shoe or apparel by athletes can be a powerful influence on students and other fans. Should high school and college coaches be paid to determine what brand of athletic equipment their players wear?

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12

Income and Social Class

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why

12-1 Our confidence in our future, as well as in the overall economy, determines how freely we spend and the types of products we buy.

12-2 We group consumers into social classes that say a lot about where they stand in society.

12-3 Individuals' desires to make a statement about their social class, or the class to which they hope to belong, influence the products they like and dislike.

Finally, the big day has come! Phil is going home with Marilyn to meet her parents. He was doing some contracting work at the securities firm where Marilyn works, and it was love at first sight. Even though Phil attended the "School of Hard Knocks" on the streets of Brooklyn and Marilyn was fresh out of Princeton, somehow they knew they could work things out despite their vastly different backgrounds. Marilyn hinted that her family has money, but Phil doesn't feel intimidated. After all, he knows plenty of guys from his old neighborhood who wheeled-and-dealed their way into six figures. He certainly can handle one more big shot in a silk suit who flashes a roll of bills and who shows off his expensive modern furniture with mirrors and gadgets everywhere you look.



Source: Sakala/Shutterstock.

When they arrive at the family estate in Connecticut, Phil looks for a blinged-out Escalade parked in the circular driveway, but he only sees a beat-up Jeep Cherokee, which must belong to one of the servants. Once inside, Phil is surprised by how simply the house is decorated and by how shabby everything seems. A faded Oriental rug covers the hall entryway and all of the furniture looks really old.

Phil is even more surprised when he meets Marilyn's father. He had half-expected Mr. Caldwell to be wearing a tuxedo and holding a large brandy snifter like the rich people he's seen in the movies. In fact, Phil has put on his best shiny Italian suit in anticipation, and he wore his large cubic zirconium pinky ring so this guy would know that he has some money, too. When Marilyn's father emerges from his study wearing an old, rumpled pullover and tennis sneakers, Phil realizes he's definitely not one of those guys from the old neighborhood.

OBJECTIVE 12-1
Our confidence in our future, as well as in the overall economy, determines how freely we spend and the types of products we buy.

Income and Consumer Identity

As Phil's eye-opening experience at the Caldwells' house suggests, there are many ways to spend money, and there's also a wide gulf between those who have it and those who don't. Perhaps an equally wide gap exists between those who have had it for a long time and those who "made it the hard way—by earning it!" As this chapter begins, we briefly consider how general economic conditions affect the way we allocate our money. Then, to reflect the adage that says, "The rich are different," we'll explore how people who occupy different positions in society consume in very different ways.

To Spend or Not to Spend, That Is the Question

Consumer demand for goods and services depends on both our ability and our willingness to buy. Although demand for necessities tends to be stable over time, we postpone or eliminate other expenditures if we don't feel that now is a good time to spend money.[1] For example, you may decide to "make do" with your current clunker for another year rather than buy a new car right away. Even businesses like warehouse clubs that sell staples by the case feel the pain when shoppers postpone their purchases; stores such as Costco and Sam's Club post big losses when people no longer buy their discounted jewelry and clothing, even though sales of paper towels and pickles hold steady.[2]

Discretionary income is the money available to a household over and above what it requires to have a comfortable standard of living. How much money do people need to be "comfortable?" One study that analyzed survey data from more than 450,000 respondents concluded that the magic number is an annual income of $75,000. Emotional well-being steadily rises as people get to this level, but it does not significantly increase after that.[3]

Economists estimate that U.S. consumers wield about $14 trillion a year in discretionary spending power.[4] People aged 35 to 55, whose incomes are at a peak, account for about half of this amount. As the population ages and income levels rise, the way a typical U.S. household spends its money changes. The most noticeable shift is to allocate a much larger share of a budget to shelter and transportation and less to food and apparel. (Note: This doesn't mean that higher-income households buy less food and clothing; it's just that the *proportion* of dollars they spend on these categories decreases.)

After the Great Recession of 2009, many consumers experienced doubts about their individual and collective futures. Even though the economy has recovered nicely since then, it's hard to tell how this traumatic period influenced some people's attitudes about money and its importance. We all know *tightwads* who hate to part with even a penny (and who actually experience emotional pain when they hand over their cash) and *spendthrifts* who enjoy nothing more than buying everything in sight. Research on this issue finds that (stereotypes aside) U.S. tightwads outnumber spendthrifts. Men are more likely than women to be tightwads, as are older people and those with more education. How do we tell a tightwad from someone who's just being frugal? One of the researchers puts it this way: "The evidence suggests that frugality is driven by a pleasure of saving, as compared with tightwaddism, which is driven by a pain of paying."[5]

Money has complex psychological meanings; we equate it with success or failure, social acceptability, security, love, freedom, and yes, even sex appeal.[6] There are

therapists who specialize in treating money-related disorders, and they report that some people even feel guilty about their success and deliberately make bad investments to reduce this feeling! Some other clinical conditions include *atephobia* (fear of being ruined), *harpaxophobia* (fear of becoming a victim of robbers), *peniaphobia* (fear of poverty), and *aurophobia* (fear of gold).[7]

A study explored some interesting links between our need for acceptance and feelings about cash. In one case, participants were either led to believe that a group had rejected them or that it had accepted them. They then completed measures that reflected their desire for money. Those whom the group rejected scored higher on these measures. At another stage, subjects counted either real money or pieces of paper and then experienced physical pain. Those who counted money reported they felt less pain than did those who just counted paper![8]

Consumer Confidence

Our expectations about the future affect our current spending, and these individual decisions add up to affect a society's economic well-being.[9] Consumers' beliefs about what the future holds are an indicator of **consumer confidence**. This measure reflects how optimistic or pessimistic people are about the future health of the economy and how they predict they'll fare down the road. These beliefs are important because they influence how much money people pump into the economy when they make discretionary purchases.

Many businesses take forecasts about anticipated spending seriously, and periodic surveys "take the pulse" of the U.S. consumer. The Conference Board conducts a survey of consumer confidence, as does the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. The following are the types of questions they pose to consumers:[10]

- Would you say that you and your family are better off or worse off financially than a year ago?
- Will you be better off or worse off a year from now?
- Is now a good time or a bad time for people to buy major household items, such as furniture or a refrigerator?
- Do you plan to buy a car in the next year?

When people are somewhat pessimistic about their prospects and about the state of the economy, as they are now, they tend to cut back on what they spend and take on less debt. When consumers feel optimistic about the future, they reduce the amount they save, they take on more debt, and they splurge on discretionary items. A range of factors influence the overall **savings rate** including individual consumers' pessimism or optimism about their personal circumstances, such as a sudden increase in personal wealth as the result of an inheritance and global events such as the Great Recession.[11]

Income Inequality and Social Mobility

Take a moment to think about this: The 80 richest people in the world are worth $1.9 trillion. This is about the same amount shared by the 3.5 billion people who are in the bottom half of the world's income. And, the most affluent one percent of people worldwide control more than half the globe's total wealth.[12] In the last few years the label **One Percenter** entered our nation's vocabulary. Beginning with the Occupy Wall Street movement during which protestors camped out in cities across the United States, the spotlight has been on the people who earn the top 1 percent of income in our country. The wealthiest 160,000 U.S. families have as much wealth



Income inequality is emerging as one of the most important issues for many people in the United States.
Source: Kevork Djansezian/Getty Images.

as the poorest 145 million families.[13] The wealthiest 1 percent of Americans have roughly doubled their share of national income since 1980; it now hovers at around 20 percent.[14]

Today one of the biggest issues we hear about is **income inequality**, that is, the extent to which resources are distributed unevenly within a population. One consequence of rising inequality is that more consumers worry about "falling behind" if a breadwinner loses his or her job or if the family can no longer afford the cost of housing, transportation, and other necessities. For example, a researcher who conducted an in-depth study of residents of a rural trailer park identified one segment of consumers she called the *Reluctant Emigrants*. These people once lived in fixed-site homes but various economic problems forced them to move to the more affordable trailer park. Because their lives are on a downward trajectory, their primary concerns focus on security and protection.[15]

Citigroup strategists coined the term **plutonomy** to describe an economy that's driven by a fairly small number of rich people.[16] This term seems increasingly appropriate to describe the United States because the share of households that are in the middle-income bracket (earning $35,000 to $100,000 per year) is steadily shrinking.[17] One indicator of income inequality is the **CEO pay ratio**, which compares the salary of a company's chief executive to the earnings of a typical employee. That number grew from 20 in 1965 to a median of 140 in 2018.[18] This gap is larger than most other countries. Recent reports indicate that the United States has the largest income inequality among developed countries. The only countries with a bigger disparity are Chile, Mexico, and Turkey.[19]

Social mobility refers to the "passage of individuals from one social class to another."[20] *Horizontal mobility* occurs when a person moves from one position to another that's roughly equivalent in social status; for instance, a nurse becomes an elementary school teacher. *Downward mobility* is, of course, movement none of us wants, but unfortunately we observe this pattern fairly often, as farmers and other displaced workers go on welfare rolls or join the ranks of the homeless. By one estimate, between 2.3 million and 3.5 million Americans experience homelessness during a given year.[21]

Marketing Pitfall

A person's credit score, that is based on his or her outstanding debt and payment histories, used to be an obscure figure that credit card and mortgage companies consulted to decide if he or she qualified for a loan. Today that score has become a badge that many use to "keep score" of a person's worth. Some companies consider this magic score when they make hiring decisions, and increasingly individuals even use it to identify suitable dating partners. As one financial advisor put it, "Credit scores are like the dating equivalent of a sexually transmitted disease test. It's a shorthand way to get a sense of someone's financial past the same way an S.T.D. test gives some information about a person's sexual past." Another executive stated, "It's the only grade that matters after you graduate." Several dating sites including Creditscoredating.com and Datemycreditscore.com use this measure to screen potential suitors for members.[27]



In our society, wealth is still more likely to be earned than inherited although this pattern seems to be shifting.
Source: From 2000 advertising campaign. Courtesy of The Phoenix Companies, Inc.

Despite that discouraging trend, demographics decree that overall there must be *upward mobility* in our society. The middle and upper classes reproduce less (i.e., have fewer children per family) than the lower classes (an effect demographers call *differential fertility*), and they tend to restrict family size to below replacement level (i.e., they often have only one child). Therefore, so the reasoning goes, over time those of lower status must fill positions of higher status.[22]

Despite the well-deserved reputation of the United States as the "land of opportunity," social mobility today is a harder climb in the United States than in many other developed economies such as Canada, Denmark, Australia, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Germany, and Spain. One widely cited report, for example, found that the economic advantage of having an affluent father is much more likely to influence the fortune of his son in the United States than in most other Western countries.[23] Another analysis found that the likelihood of staying in the *same* social class as your parents is 0.47 in the United States, compared to only 0.15 in Denmark.[24] Many Americans report that the bulk of their friends have about the same level of income and education as they do.[25]

Within the United States, we see the most social mobility in the Northeast, Great Plains, and West, whereas the odds of moving up are much lower in the Southeast and Midwest. One apparent factor for this difference is that, all things equal, there is more upward mobility in metropolitan areas where poor families live alongside relatively more well-off people rather than being segregated into low-income neighborhoods. Mobility also is more robust in areas with a greater number of two-parent households, better schools, and more civic engagement such as memberships in religious and community groups.[26]



Some online dating sites use credit scores to screen potential suitors.
Source: Creditscoredating.com.

The Great Recession and Materialism

The Great Recession officially lasted from December 2007 to June 2009. During this period we witnessed the largest drop in employment since the Great Depression. Even a decade later, we feel the aftershocks of this economic upheaval.[28] The loss of wealth prompted drastic changes in consumer spending that almost overnight altered the landscape of consumer behavior. The "go-go" years seem like a distant memory as many people suddenly put the brakes on their BUY NOW mentality. The new mantra: Make do with what you have. Save. Question every expense: Do you really need that Starbucks latte, that $80 haircut, that fashion magazine? Thriftiness is in, eye-popping bling is out.

Even many *fashionistas* turned into ***frugalistas***—they refuse to sacrifice style, but they achieve it on a budget. Now it's cool to visit websites and blogs that celebrate frugality, such as Dollar Stretcher (stretcher.com), All Things Frugal (allthingsfrugal.com), and Frugal Mom (frugalmom.net).[29] Today our economy is steadily recovering as income continues to rise each year. Median household income moved from about $53,000 in 2011 to about $59,000 now, so things are on the mend.[30] Still, even though our pockets are fuller now, only time will tell if frugality becomes "the new normal."

Marketing Opportunity

Housing prices in many U.S. cities skyrocket as the appeal of living in a cool urban environment grows. And, more people want to live alone so it's even harder to find a suitable place. The single occupancy rate exceeds 40 percent in Atlanta, Cincinnati, Denver, Pittsburgh, Seattle, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C. One solution: "Micro-sized" apartments that average around 300 square feet, just a little bigger than a typical single-car garage in the 'burbs. City planners like this new mini-sizing trend because these so-called "aPodments" or "micro-lofts" are both economical and eco-friendly. Just don't plan on throwing any big parties.[31]

Income-Based Marketing

As we recover from the Great Recession, the average American's standard of living continues to improve—though many consumers still don't get a full ticket to the American Dream. About 43 million people live in poverty, including roughly 20 percent of children younger than age 18.[32] Two factors contribute to an (overall) upward income trajectory: a shift in women's roles and increases in educational attainment:[33]

1. Mothers with preschool children are the fastest-growing segment of working people. Furthermore, many of them work in high-paying occupations, such as medicine and architecture, which men used to dominate. Although women are still a minority in most professional occupations, their ranks continue to swell. Unfortunately, the **female-to-male earnings ratio** is 0.78, which means that on average a woman earns 78 cents for every dollar a man brings home. The good news is that working wives account for almost half of household earnings today.
2. Although picking up the tab for college often entails great sacrifice, it still pays off in the long run. The **college wage premium**, which describes the gap between what workers with a college degree earn compared with those without one, has



Micro-sized apartments are popping up in big cities as an affordable option for people who want to live on their own.
Source: Courtesy of Panoramic Interests.

grown dramatically. Compared to a premium of about 40 percent in the late 1970s, today degree holders earn 80 percent more. The Federal Reserve Board estimates that during a lifetime on average a person with a degree will earn $830,000 more than someone with just a high school diploma.[34] So, hang in there!

Targeting the Top of the Pyramid: High-Income Consumers

How does this deal sound to enhance your college experience? If you go to school in London and you happen to have a few pounds to rub together, you can join The Luxury Student. This is a subscription service designed for well-off students; it's "a truly unique service for those who seek the finer things in life." For "only" 50 pounds a month (about $68), you get a "VIP" student experience that includes a free Nespresso machine, a blogger photoshoot, surprise luxury gifts and access to Quintessentially Travel, a "luxury lifestyle travel management company."[35] Who says college has to be about living on ramen noodles? How dreary . . .

Many marketers try to target affluent, upscale markets. This often makes sense, because these consumers obviously have the resources to spend on costly products that command higher profit margins. However, it is a mistake to assume that we should place everyone with a high income into the same market segment. As we noted previously, social class involves more than absolute income. It is also a way of life, and several factors—including where they got their money, how they got it, and how long they have had it—significantly affect wealthy people's interests and spending priorities.[36]

Despite our stereotype of rich people who just party all day long, one study found that the typical millionaire is a 57-year-old man who is self-employed, earns a median household income of $131,000, has been married to the same wife for most of his adult life, has children, has never spent more than $399 on a suit or more than $140 for a pair of shoes, and drives a Ford Explorer (the humble billionaire investor Warren Buffett comes to mind). Interestingly, many affluent people don't consider themselves to be rich. One tendency researchers notice is that these people indulge in luxury goods while they pinch pennies on everyday items; they buy shoes at Neiman Marcus and deodorant at Walmart, for example.[37]

SRI Consulting Business Intelligence divides consumers into three groups based on their attitudes toward luxury:

1. **Luxury is functional**—These consumers use their money to buy things that will last and have enduring value. They conduct extensive prepurchase research and make logical decisions rather than emotional or impulsive choices.
2. **Luxury is a reward**—These consumers tend to be younger than the first group but older than the third group. They use luxury goods to say, "I've made it." The desire to be successful and to demonstrate their success to others motivates these consumers to purchase conspicuous luxury items, such as high-end automobiles and homes in exclusive communities.
3. **Luxury is indulgence**—This group is the smallest of the three and tends to include younger consumers and slightly more males than the other two groups. To these consumers, the purpose of owning luxury is to be extremely lavish and self-indulgent. This group is willing to pay a premium for goods that express their individuality and make others take notice. They have a more emotional approach to luxury spending and are more likely than the other two groups to make impulse purchases.[38]

People who have had money for a long time tend to use their fortunes a lot differently. *Old money* families (e.g., the Rockefellers, DuPonts, Fords, and others) live primarily on inherited funds. One commentator called this group "the class in hiding."[39] Following the Great Depression of the 1930s, moneyed families became more discreet about exhibiting their wealth. Many fled from mansions such as those we still find in Manhattan (the renovated Vanderbilt mansion now is Ralph Lauren's flagship store) to hideaways in Virginia, Connecticut, and New Jersey.

Mere wealth is not sufficient to achieve social prominence in these circles. You also need to demonstrate a family history of public service and philanthropy, and tangible markers of these contributions often enable donors to achieve a kind of immortality (e.g., Rockefeller University, Carnegie Hall, or the Whitney Museum).[40] "Old money" consumers distinguish among themselves in terms of ancestry and lineage rather than wealth.[41] Furthermore, they're secure in their status. In a sense, they have trained their whole lives to be rich.

In contrast to people with old money, today there are many people—including high-profile billionaires such as Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and Sir Richard Branson—who are "the working wealthy."[42] The Horatio Alger myth, where a person goes from "rags to riches" through hard work and a bit of luck, is still a powerful force in our society. That's why a commercial that showed the actual garage where the two cofounders of Hewlett-Packard first worked struck a chord in so many.



Louboutin shoes, with their distinctive red soles, are a coveted luxury product for many women
Source: denisfilm/123RF.

Although many people do in fact become "self-made millionaires," they often encounter a problem (although not the worst problem one could think of!) after they have become wealthy and change their social status. The label ***nouveau riche*** describes consumers who recently achieved their wealth and who don't have the benefit of years of training to learn how to spend it.

Pity the poor nouveau riches; many suffer from *status anxiety*. They monitor the cultural environment to ensure that they do the "right" thing, wear the "right" clothes, get seen at the "right" places, use the "right" caterer, and so on.[43] Their flamboyant consumption is an example of *symbolic self-completion* (we discussed this in Chapter 6) because they try to display symbols they believe have "class" to make up for an internal lack of assurance about the "correct" way to behave.[44] In major Chinese cities such as Shanghai, some people wear pajamas in public as a way to flaunt their new-found wealth. As one consumer explained, "Only people in cities can afford clothes like this. In farming villages, they still have to wear old work clothes to bed."[45]

Targeting the Bottom of the Pyramid: Low-Income Consumers

Although poor people obviously have less to spend than do rich ones, they have the same basic needs as everyone else. Low-income families purchase staples, such as milk, orange juice, and tea, at the same rates as average-income families. Minimum wage–level households spend more than average on out-of-pocket healthcare costs, rent, and the food they eat at home.[46]

And, of course, the market size is huge: Although there are 6.6 billion consumers in the world, only 1.5 billion of them possess enough purchasing power to buy $10,000 worth of products for themselves and their families. The other 5.1 billion people—78 percent of the global population—are low-income consumers.[47] Analysts refer to this vast number of consumers as the **bottom of the pyramid**. Figure 12.1 provides one framework to help marketers make needed changes to provide for the needs of low-income consumers around the world.

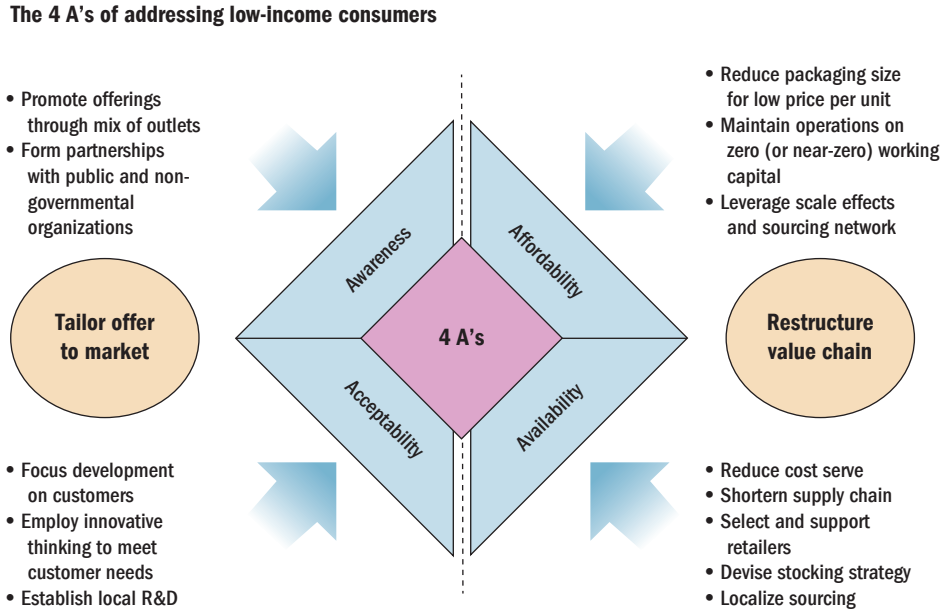


Figure 12-1 THE 4 A'S

Source: Jamie Anderson and Niels Billou, "Serving the World's Poor: Innovation at the Base of the Economic Pyramid," Journal of Business Strategy, 28, 2: 14–21, reprinted in A. T. Kearney, Serving the Low-Income Consumer: How to Tackle This Mostly Ignored Market, 2011.



The Digital Divide between the rich and the poor is still a reality.
Source: Deshakalyan Chowdhury/AFP/Getty Images.

The Tangled Web

Because so much of what happens in the world today happens online, people who don't have access to the internet can be at a real disadvantage. The so-called Digital Divide between the rich and the poor is still a reality. According to a study by the Pew Research Center, 87 percent of U.S. households making more than $75,000 have broadband access at home. But overall, only one-quarter of U.S. households do. Not surprisingly, affluent people are also much more likely to own cell phones, computers, e-readers, and other entertainment devices.[49] To compound the problem, it seems that when poorer children do use technology, they don't use it as constructively. Data show that these kids spend much more time than do children from affluent families to use their gadgets to watch videos, play games, and connect on social networking sites, rather than for educational purposes. One reason for this gap is that low-income parents are more likely to use these media as an "electronic babysitter" when they go off to work. According to one study, children of parents who do not have a college degree spent 90 minutes more per day with media compared to more affluent families.[50]

Some multinational companies have woken up to the potential of this huge market. They focus on engineering innovations that allow them to produce inexpensive products that still function as people need them to:[48]

- The Nokia 105 is a tiny mobile phone that costs about $20.00. It includes a dust-proof keyboard, flashlight, alarm clock, and FM radio. The phone's battery charge lasts 35 days on standby.
- General Electric (GE) designed the Lullaby baby warmer with feedback from Indian doctors and nurses who advised on practical changes to turn a high-end product into one that many parents can access. The company replaced an expensive hand crank that lifts the baby's head with a simple plastic triangle that fits under the mattress. The mattress is covered in a tough plastic that resists tears, and GE developed an inexpensive LED device to replace the fluorescent bulbs other warmers use to create heat.
- A startup company called d.light sells portable solar lighting units in 62 countries to people who don't have steady access to electricity.

OBJECTIVE 12-2
We group consumers into social classes that say a lot about where they stand in society.

Social Class and Consumer Identity

Members of every society divide into the "haves" and the "have-nots" (though the amount people "have" is relative). The United States is a place where "all men are created equal," but even so some people seem to be more equal than others. A complex set of variables, including income, family background, and occupation, determines your standing in society. The place you occupy in the social structure helps to determine not only how much money you spend but also *how* you spend it. The sociologist W. Lloyd Warner proposed the most influential classification of U.S. class structure in 1941. Warner identified six social classes:[51]

1 Upper Upper
2 Lower Upper

3 Upper Middle
4 Lower Middle
5 Upper Lower
6 Lower Lower

Other social scientists have proposed variations on this system over the years, but Warner's six levels summarize fairly well the way we still think about class, even though the proportion of consumers who fall into each category fluctuates over time.

Pick a Pecking Order

In many animal species, a social organization develops whereby the most assertive or aggressive animals exert control over the others and have the first pick of food, living space, and even mating partners. Chickens, for example, exhibit a clearly defined **dominance–submission hierarchy**. Within this hierarchy, each hen has a position in which she is submissive to all the hens above her and she dominates all the ones below her (hence the origin of the term *pecking order*).[52]

People are not much different. We also develop a pecking order that ranks us in terms of our relative standing in society. This rank determines our access to such resources as education, housing, and consumer goods. People try to move up in the social order to improve their ranking. This desire to improve your lot in life, and often to let others know that you have done so, is at the core of many marketing strategies.

Just as marketers carve society into groups for segmentation purposes, sociologists describe divisions of society in terms of people's relative social and economic resources. Some of these divisions involve political power, whereas others revolve around purely economic distinctions. Karl Marx, the 19th-century economic theorist, argued that a person's relationship to the *means of production* determined his position in a society. The haves control resources, and they use the labor of others to preserve their privileged positions. The have-nots depend on their own labor for survival, so these people have the most to gain if they change the system. The German sociologist Max Weber showed that the rankings people develop are not one-dimensional. Some involve prestige or "social honor" (he called these *status groups*), some rankings focus on power (or *party*), and some revolve around wealth and property (*class*).[53]

We use the term **social class** more generally to describe the overall rank of people in a society. People who belong to the same social class have approximately equal social standing in the community. They work in roughly similar occupations, and they tend to have similar lifestyles by virtue of their income levels and common tastes. These people tend to socialize with one another and share many ideas and values regarding the way life should be lived.[54]

Indeed, "birds of a feather do flock together." We tend to marry people in a social class similar to our own, a tendency sociologists call **homogamy** or *assortative mating.* More than 90 percent of married high school dropouts marry someone who also dropped out or who has only a high school diploma. On the other side of the spectrum, less than 1 percent of the most highly educated Americans have a spouse who did not complete high school.[55]

Social class is as much a state of being as it is of having: It's also a matter of what you do with your money and how you define your role in society. Although we may not like the idea that some members of society are better off or "different" from others, most consumers do acknowledge the existence of different classes and the

effect of class membership on consumption. As one wealthy woman observed when researchers asked her to define social class:

> I would suppose social class means where you went to school and how far. Your intelligence. Where you live . . . [w]here you send your children to school. The hobbies you have. Skiing, for example, is higher than the snowmobile . . . . It can't be [just] money, because nobody ever knows that about you for sure.[56]

In school, some kids seem to get all the breaks. They have access to many resources, such as special privileges, fancy cars, large allowances, or dates with other popular classmates. At work, some coworkers get promoted to high-prestige jobs with higher salaries and perks such as a parking space, a large office, or the keys to the executive washroom.

Social Stratification

Indeed, in virtually every context some people rank higher than others—even if they just have a larger number of Twitter followers. Patterns of social arrangements evolve whereby some members get more resources than others by virtue of their relative standing, power, or control in the group.[57] The process of **social stratification** refers to this creation of artificial divisions, "those processes in a social system by which scarce and valuable resources are distributed unequally to status positions that become more or less permanently ranked in terms of the share of valuable resources each receives."[58]

Whether rewards go to the "best and the brightest" or to someone who happens to be related to the boss, allocations are rarely equal within a social group. Most groups exhibit a structure, or **status hierarchy** in which some members are better off than others. They may have more authority or power, or other members simply like or respect them.

In a system in which (like it or not) we define people to a great extent by what they do for a living, **occupational prestige** is one way we evaluate their "worth." Hierarchies of occupational prestige tend to be quite stable over time and across cultures. Researchers find similarities in occupational prestige in countries as diverse as Brazil, Ghana, Guam, Japan, and Turkey.[59]

A typical ranking includes a variety of professional and business occupations at the top (e.g., CEO of a large corporation, physician, and college professor); whereas jobs that hover near the bottom include shoe shiner, ditch digger, and garbage collector. Because a person's occupation links strongly to his or her use of leisure time, allocation of family resources, aesthetic preferences, and political orientation, many social scientists consider it the single best indicator of social class.

A **worldview** is another way to differentiate among social classes. To generalize, the world of the working class (i.e., the lower-middle class) is more intimate and constricted. For example, working-class men are likely to name local sports figures as heroes and are less likely to take long vacation trips to out-of-the-way places.[60] Immediate needs, such as a new refrigerator or TV, tend to dictate buying behavior, whereas the higher classes focus on more long-term goals, such as saving for college tuition or retirement.[61] Working-class consumers depend heavily on relatives for emotional support and tend to orient themselves in terms of the local community rather than the world at large. They are more likely to be conservative and family oriented. Maintaining the appearance of your home and property is a priority, regardless of the size of the house.

One study that looked at social class and how it relates to consumers' feelings of *empowerment* reported that lower-class men aren't as likely to feel they have the power to affect their outcomes. Respondents varied from those who were what the

researcher calls *potent actors* (those who believe they have the ability to take actions that affect their world) to *impotent reactors* (those who feel they are at the mercy of their economic situations). This orientation influenced consumption behaviors; for example, the professionals in the study who were likely to be potent actors set themselves up for financial opportunity and growth. They took broad perspectives on investing and planned their budgets strategically.[62]

Although they would like to have more in the way of material goods, working-class people do not necessarily envy those who rank above them in social standing.[63] They may not view the maintenance of a high-status lifestyle as worth the effort. As one blue-collar consumer commented, "Life is very hectic for those people. There are more breakdowns and alcoholism. It must be very hard to sustain the status, the clothes, and the parties that are expected. I don't think I'd want to take their place."[64]

This person may be right. Although good things appear to go hand-in-hand with higher status and wealth, the picture is not that clear. The social scientist Émile Durkheim observed that suicide rates are much higher among the wealthy; he wrote in 1897, "The possessors of most comfort suffer most."[65] Durkheim's wisdom may still be accurate today. Many well-off consumers seem to be stressed or unhappy despite or even because of their wealth, a condition some call **affluenza**.[66]

Cosmopolitanism is an aspect of worldview that is starting to receive more attention by consumer behavior researchers, who define a cosmopolitan as someone who tries to be open to the world and who strives for diverse experiences (not to be confused with the popular cocktail). This is a quality that used to be linked to the wealthy, but now—with improved access to media and of course the internet—it's no longer necessary to be rich to express an interest in a range of culturally diverse products. Cosmopolitans respond well to brands that have a "worldly" (i.e., international or global) image. They think it's important to own consumer electronics products and are more likely to engage in social media activities.[67] A scale to identify these consumers includes statements like these:

- I enjoy exchanging ideas with people from other cultures or countries.
- I am interested in learning more about people who live in other countries.
- I find people from other cultures stimulating.



Occupational prestige plays an important role in defining a status hierarchy.
Source: ESB Professional/Shutterstock.

Income versus Social Class

Although we equate money with social class, they are by no means synonymous.[68] Additional income does not necessarily propel someone to a higher class. One problem is that even if a family adds one or more wage earners and increases its household income, each additional job is likely to be lower in status than the primary wage earner's job. In addition, these members don't necessarily pool their earnings toward the common good of the family.[69]

So, is social class or income a better predictor of consumer behavior? The answer partly depends on the type of product: Do people buy it largely for its functional value (what it does), or for its symbolic value (the impression it conveys to others)?

- Social class is a better predictor of purchases that have symbolic aspects but low to moderate prices (e.g., cosmetics, liquor).
- Income is a better predictor of major expenditures that do not have status or symbolic aspects (e.g., major appliances).
- We need both social class and income data to predict purchases of expensive, symbolic products (e.g., cars, homes).

How Do We Measure Social Class?

Because social class is a complex concept that depends on a number of factors, it is not surprising that social scientists disagree on the best way to measure it. Early measures included the *Index of Status Characteristics* from the 1940s and the *Index of Social Position* from the 1950s.[70] These indices combined individual characteristics (e.g., income, type of housing) to arrive at a label of class standing. The accuracy of these composites is still a subject of debate among researchers; a study claimed that for segmentation purposes, raw education and income measures work as well as composite status measures.[71]

U.S. consumers generally have little difficulty placing themselves in either the working class (lower-middle class) or middle class.[72] Blue-collar workers with relatively high-prestige jobs still tend to view themselves as working class, even though their income levels are equivalent to those of many white-collar workers.[73] This fact reinforces the idea that the labels of "working class" or "middle class" are subjective. Their meanings say at least as much about self-identity as they do about economic well-being.

Marketing researchers were among the first to propose that we can distinguish people of different social classes from one another. However, many of the methods they originally used to place consumers into classes are badly dated and have little validity today.[74] One reason is that social scientists designed most measures of social class with the traditional nuclear family in mind; this unit included a male wage earner in the middle of his career and a female full-time homemaker. These measures have trouble accounting for two-income families, young singles living alone, or households headed by women, all of which are so prevalent today.

Another problem with measuring social class is the increasing anonymity of our society. Earlier studies relied on the *reputational method*, where researchers conducted extensive interviews within an area to determine the reputations and backgrounds of individuals. When they used information and also traced people's interaction patterns, they could generate a comprehensive view of social standing within a community. However, this approach is virtually impossible to implement

in most communities today. One compromise is to interview individuals to obtain demographic data and to combine these data with the interviewer's subjective impressions of each person's possessions and standard of living.

One problem when we assign any group of people to a social class is that they may not exhibit equal standing on all of the relevant dimensions. A person might come from a low-status ethnic group but have a high-status job, whereas another who did not finish high school may live in a fancy part of town. Social scientists use the concept of **status crystallization** to assess the impact of social class inconsistency.[75] The logic is that when these indicators are not consistent, stress occurs, because the rewards from each part of such an "unbalanced" person's life are variable and unpredictable. People who exhibit such inconsistencies tend to be more receptive to social change than are those whose identities are more firmly rooted.

A related problem occurs when a person's social-class standing creates expectations that he or she can't meet. Some people find themselves in the not-unhappy position of making more money than we expect of those in their social class. This means they are *overprivileged,* a condition we define as an income that is at least 25 to 30 percent greater than the median for their class.[76] In contrast, *underprivileged* consumers, who earn at least 15 percent less than the median, must often allocate a big chunk of their income to maintaining the impression that they occupy a certain status. For example, some people talk about being "house-poor"; they pay so much for a lavish home that they can't afford to furnish it. Today, many homeowners unfortunately find themselves in this position. Although the number of foreclosures on U.S. houses is less than half of what we saw in 2009 and 2010 after the housing bubble burst during the Great Recession, there still were 1.12 million filings in 2014.[77]

We traditionally assume that husbands define a family's social class, whereas wives must live it. Women achieve their social status through their husbands.[78] Indeed, the evidence indicates that physically attractive women do tend to "marry up" in social class to a greater extent than attractive men do. Women trade the resource of sexual appeal, which historically has been one of the few assets they were allowed to possess, for the economic resources of men.[79]

We must strongly question the accuracy of this assumption in today's world. Many women now contribute equally to the family's well-being, and they work in positions of comparable or even greater status than their spouses. Employed women tend to average both their own and their husband's positions when they estimate their own subjective status.[80] Nevertheless, a prospective spouse's social class is often an important "product attribute" when someone in the "marriage market" evaluates his or her options.

Despite the growing income inequality we discussed earlier, sharp disparities in income don't necessarily show up nearly as much as they used to in what people choose to buy. One reason is that many of us have access to many of the same products as do those in other social classes and lower income people may still choose to "splurge" on a few expensive baubles while higher-income people may enjoy the thrill of snagging bargains at Costco and Sam's Club.

Indeed, a comprehensive analysis of social-class differences using data from 675,000 households supports this notion. Differences in consumption patterns between the upper and upper-middle classes and between the middle and working classes are disappearing. However, strong differences still emerge in how consumers spend their discretionary income and leisure time. Upper- and upper-middle-class people are more likely to visit museums and attend live theater, and middle-class

consumers are more likely to camp and fish. The upper classes are more likely to listen to all-news programs, whereas the middle classes are more likely to tune in to country music.[81]

OBJECTIVE 12-3
Individuals' desires to make a statement about their social class, or the class to which they hope to belong, influence the products they like and dislike.

Status Symbols and Social Capital

Status Symbols

We tend to evaluate ourselves, our professional accomplishments, our appearance, and our material well-being relative to others. The popular phrase "keeping up with the Joneses" (in Japan, it's "keeping up with the Satos") refers to a desire to compare your standard of living with your neighbors'—and exceed it if you can. But how do we (and they) know if we're ahead in the race? That's what **status symbols** are for; this term describes possessions (or perhaps the use of services) that communicate wealth or prestige to others.

A major motivation to buy is not to enjoy these items but rather to let others know that we can afford them. These products are status symbols. The popular bumper-sticker slogan, "He who dies with the most toys, wins," summarizes the desire to accumulate these badges of achievement. Status-seeking is a significant source of motivation to procure appropriate products and services that we hope will let others know we've "made it." A study demonstrated how people turn to status symbols to prop up their self-concepts, especially when they feel badly or uncertain about other aspects of their lives. When subjects in auctions were made to feel that they had little power, they spent more to purchase items to compensate for this deficit.[119]

Often it's not enough just to have wealth or fame; what matters is that you have more of it than others. One study demonstrated that we assign value to *loyalty programs* (e.g., when airlines award you special status based on the number of miles you fly) at least in part based on our level in the hierarchy relative to other members. Subjects were assigned to "gold status" in a program where they were in the only tier, or a program where there was also a silver tier. Although both groups were "gold," those in the program that also offered a lower level felt better about it.[82]

Marketing Opportunity

Of course, just what connotes status changes over time and differs among types of consumers. This means marketers need to be very vigilant about keeping up with these changes. One person's Cadillac is another's Tesla. And to complicate matters even more, in some cases we confer status on people who are savvy enough to save money by not going in for traditional status items (getting a headache yet?). For example, a trend among young brides is to choose a ring made of moissanite instead of a diamond. This generation as a rule values experiences to material objects so some of them choose to allocate their wedding budgets to exotic vacations (or even mortgages) rather than breaking the bank for a traditional wedding. Research on young consumers finds that while about half still prefer real diamonds, many others opt for "dupe" alternatives that stand in for the far more expensive gems. And, those who value ethical shopping also have the comfort of knowing these options are conflict-free. The moissanite market is project to hit $50 million by 2025. So, after all is said and done, are diamonds "still a girl's best friend"?[83]

"What Do You Use That Fork For?" Taste Cultures and Codes

A **taste culture** describes consumers in terms of their aesthetic and intellectual preferences. This concept helps to illuminate the important, yet sometimes subtle, distinctions in consumption choices and behavior among the social classes.[84] Indeed, at least one recent study suggests that materialistic people are nastier than others! The researchers reported that shoppers who came out of luxury brand stores were less likely to help people on the street compared to those who walked out of "ordinary" stores.[85]

In one of the classic studies of social differences in taste, researchers catalogued homeowners' possessions as they sat in their living rooms and asked them about their income and occupation. As Figure 12.2 shows, they identified clusters of furnishings and decorative items that seemed to appear together with some regularity, and they

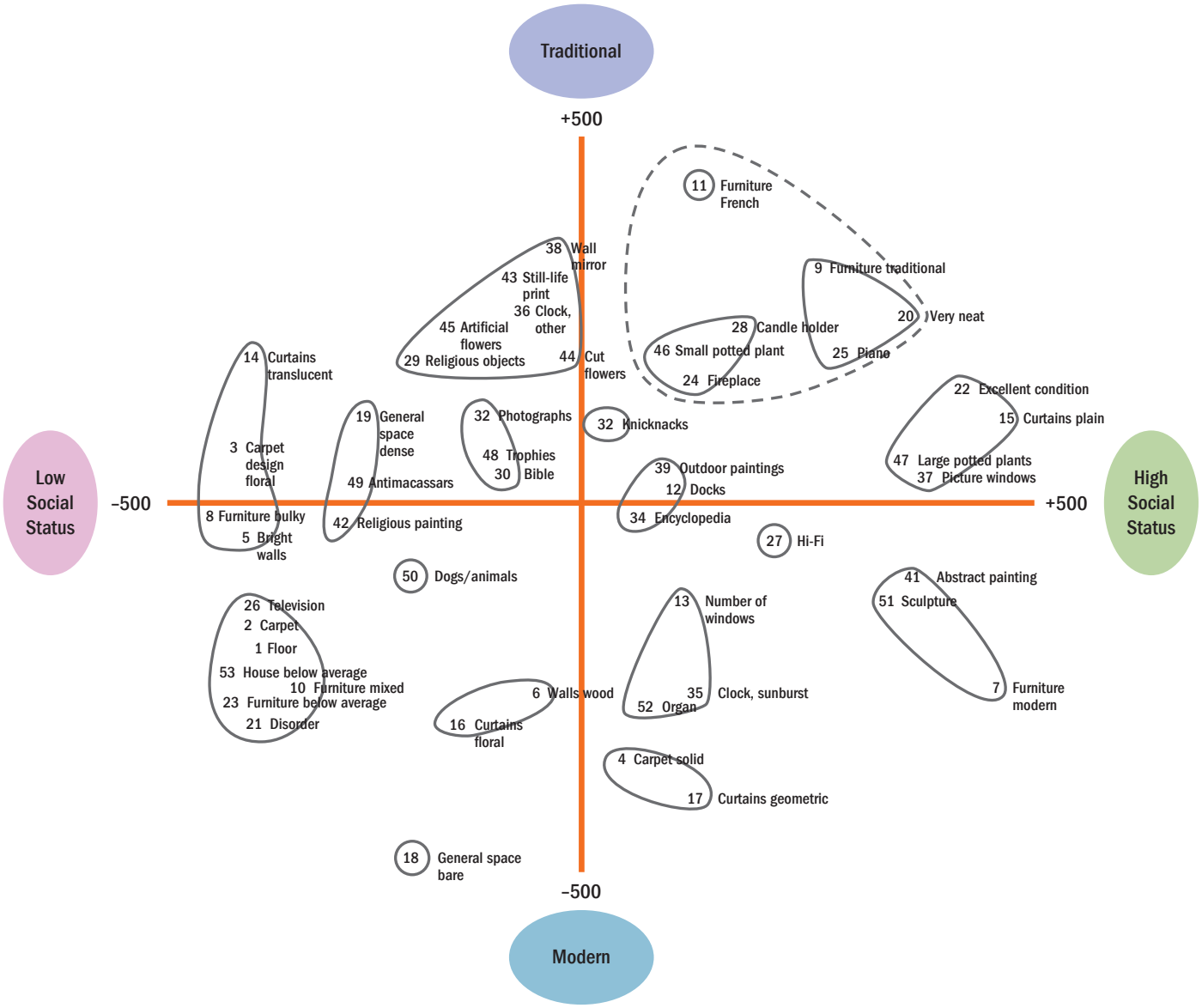


Figure 12-2 LIVING ROOM CLUSTERS AND SOCIAL CLASS

Source: Adapted from Edward O. Laumann and James S. House, "Living Room Styles and Social Attributes: The Patterning of Material Artifacts in a Model Urban Community," *Sociology and Social Research* 54 (April 1970): 321–342. Copyright, University of Southern California, April 1970. All rights reserved.

found different clusters depending on the consumer's social status. For example, they tended to find a cluster that consisted of religious objects, artificial flowers, and still-life portraits in relatively lower-status living rooms, whereas they were likely to catalogue a cluster of abstract paintings, sculptures, and modern furniture in a higher-status home.[86]

Another approach to social class focuses on the **codes** (the ways consumers express and interpret meanings) people within different social strata use. It's valuable for marketers to map these codes because they can use concepts and terms that their target customers will relate to. Marketing appeals we construct with class differences in mind result in quite different messages. For example, a life insurance ad that a company targets to a lower-class person might depict, in simple, straightforward

TABLE 12.1 Effects of Restricted versus Elaborated Codes

	Restricted Codes	Elaborated Codes
General characteristics	Emphasize description and contents of objects Have implicit meanings (context dependent)	Emphasize analysis and interrelationship between objects; i.e., hierarchical organization and instrumental connections Have explicit meanings
Language	Use few qualifiers, i.e., few adjectives or adverbs	Have language rich in personal, individual qualifiers
	Use concrete, descriptive, tangible symbolism	Use large vocabulary, complex conceptual hierarchy
Social relationships	Stress attributes of individuals over formal roles	Stress formal role structure, instrumental relationships
Time	Focus on present; have only general notion of future	Focus an instrumental relationship between present activities and future rewards
Physical space	Locate rooms, spaces in context of other rooms and places: e.g., "front room," "corner store"	Identify rooms, spaces in terms of usage; formal ordering of spaces; e.g., "dining room," "financial district"
Implications for marketers	Stress inherent product quality, contents (or trustworthiness, goodness of "real-type"), spokesperson	Stress differences, advantages vis-à-vis other products in terms of some autonomous evaluation criteria
	Stress implicit fit of product with total lifestyle	Stress product's instrumental ties to distant benefits
	Use simple adjectives, descriptions	Use complex adjectives, descriptors

Source: Adapted from Jeffrey F. Durgee, "How Consumer Sub-Cultures Code Reality: A Look at Some Code Types," in Richard J. Lutz, ed., *Advances in Consumer Research* 13 (Provo, UT: Association of Consumer Research, 1986): 332.

terms, a hard-working family man who feels good immediately after he buys a policy. An upscale appeal might depict a more affluent older couple surrounded by photos of their children and grandchildren. It might include extensive copy that plugs the satisfaction of planning for the future.

These two ways to communicate product benefits incorporate different types of codes. **Restricted codes** focus on the content of objects, not on relationships among objects. **Elaborated codes**, in contrast, are more complex and depend on a more sophisticated worldview. These code differences extend to the way consumers approach basic concepts such as time, social relationships, and objects. Table 12.1 summarizes some differences between these two code types.

Clearly, not all taste cultures are created equal. The upper classes have access to resources that enable them to perpetuate their privileged position in society. Pierre Bourdieu was a French theorist who wrote at length about how people compete for resources, or *capital*. Bourdieu did large-scale surveys to track people's wealth, and he related this "economic capital" to patterns of taste in entertainment and the arts. He concluded that "taste" is a status-marking force, or **habitus**, that causes consumption preferences to cluster together. Later analyses of U.S. consumers largely confirm these relationships; for example, higher-income people are more likely than the average consumer to attend the theater, whereas lower-income people are more likely to attend a wrestling match.[87]

It's getting more difficult to clearly link certain brands or stores with a specific class. That's because a lot of "affordable luxuries" now are within reach of many consumers who could not have acquired them in the past. Think of college women you may know who buy pricey bags from Louis Vuitton or Coach, and then eat ramen noodles for dinner. To make matters even more confusing, a wealthy family may well buy its wine at Costco and its bath towels at Target—and proudly gloat about the deals they snagged.[88]

Social and Cultural Capital

The Burning Man Festival began in 1986 as a Summer Solstice celebration on a San Francisco beach that attracted a small group of people. Some of them built an eight-foot tall wooden man and set it on fire. Over the years the event attracted more and more people who celebrated "alternative lifestyles" with bizarre costumes, primitive camps, and ample mind-altering substances. As the event grew, organizers moved it to the desert to accommodate more attendees. Since that time, however, this countercultural festival has evolved into something quite different: A huge annual retreat in the Black Rock Desert north of Reno, Nevada, that attracts wealthy technology moguls who engage in one-upmanship to show one another just how much money they can flaunt in the name of weirdness. Luminaries from Facebook, Amazon, Google, Twitter, Uber, and other hot Silicon Valley outfits go **glamping** in splendor with their entourages, and fees purportedly reach $25,000 per person. They arrive in tricked-out RVs like the ones celebrities stay in on movie sets; these connect together to create private enclaves that other attendees can't penetrate. Guests arrive on private jets and spend the week dining on sushi and lobster as they "get back to nature" in style.[89]

The transformation of Burning Man from what used to be known as a countercultural celebration to a showcase for wealth illustrates Bourdieu's concept of **social capital**. Exclusivity functions like a big, beefy nightclub bouncer who decides who he will admit past the velvet rope. An important form of "currency" is access to exclusive networks where business and political deals happen. In the process, paradoxically it's not unusual to find that the people who originated the activity can no longer afford to participate, like the original Burning Man "hippies" or long-time residents who get priced out of gentrifying urban neighborhoods.

Bourdieu also reminds us of the importance of **cultural capital**. This term refers to a set of distinctive and socially rare tastes and practices—knowledge of "refined" behavior that admits a person into the realm of the upper class.[90] The elites in a society collect a set of skills that enable them to hold positions of power and authority, and they pass these on to their children (think etiquette lessons and debutante balls). These resources gain in value because class members restrict access to them. That's part of the reason why people compete so fiercely for admission to elite colleges. Much as we hate to admit it, the rich *are* different.

Online Social Capital

Because we spend so much time in digital environments, it's natural that the same social class dynamics operate in these spaces. When you're online, it's not so much what you own as what you post or how you post it that raises or lowers your status among your network (unless you're one of those people who loves to post photos on Instagram of every expensive outfit, car, or other merch you've just bought). Indeed, just being active online can boost your standing in others' eyes:

According to one study, people assume that if a person posts on Facebook about how busy she or he is, that's enough to infer that the person is competent, ambitious, and successful. The same holds true for people who use hi-tech timesaving products, such as a hands-free Bluetooth headset or online grocery shopping and delivery services.[91]

And, of course social media posts are a prime way to let others know when you've snagged a status symbol ("eat your hearts out, BFFs!"). While about as many people stay at the budget hotel Circus Circus and the luxury hotel Bellagio in Las Vegas, the latter gets about three times as many check-ins on Facebook. Owners of luxury cars such as BMWs and Mercedes-Benzes are 2.5 times more likely to announce their ownership on Facebook as do those who own less expensive cars.[92]

Let's use the social media platform Pinterest to understand how online social capital works. People visit this digital scrap-boarding site because they can search for images of clothing, home furnishings, or many other items and create boards that reflect their tastes. But they also actively follow others' boards to get inspired by their ideas. Some users attract huge followings and acquire "celebrity" status. For example, Joy Cho (aka Oh Joy!) has a board called "Recipes" with almost four million followers.[93] As a result, she accumulates social capital due to her followers. If and when people move on to something else, the social capital that flows from being a Pinterest attraction will slow to a trickle. At that point, we're on to the next hot site—fortunately for Joy, she's also a hot ticket on Instagram! As a platform declines, the community experiences a big drop off in participation, adherence to norms, perceived reputation, and trust among members.[94] Think about formerly popular online communities like MySpace or Friendster to understand how platforms can lose their cool almost overnight.

In the online world, many people hold others in high regard for their opinions as much as, or maybe even more than, for their money. The "psychic income" we get when we post reviews that others validate creates a **reputation economy**, in which the "currency" people earn is approval rather than cold hard cash.[95] Retailers may "sort" clientele in terms of their ability to afford the retailers' products or services (e.g., some investment firms only accept clients with a certain net worth). Volunteers who edit *Wikipedia* entries may devote 20 to 40 hours per week. Exclusive dating sites like hotenough.org weed out unattractive people. The site's home page claims, "Through our screening process, we have filtered the masses leaving only your area's most attractive, fit, trendy singles and have now included an exclusive section for our 40+ singles, the 'BABY BOOMER SECTION.' Hot Enough offers three tiers of hotties, so if you're fit and trendy, then rest assured there is a place for you."[96]

In general, we know that a community is healthier and more desirable when it is able to offer a lot of social capital as an inducement for people to join; that's one reason why the competition is fierce to get admitted to Ivy League universities. This is true in the online world as well. In the online world, bloggers acquire social capital when a lot of other people start to rate their posts highly and perhaps retweet them.[97] And, like exclusive country clubs, **online gated communities** that selectively allow access to some people may offer a high degree of social capital to the lucky few who pass the test.

The social network This.com is an invitation-only platform that allows a user to post only one link a day to focus those in the know on a particular topic. Journalists and industry insiders jockey ferociously to receive a coveted invite.[98] Or, consider ASmallWorld.com, a social networking site that gives the wealthy access to one

another in cyberspace—while keeping the rest of us out. It's an invitation-only site that's grown to about 150,000 registered users. The site's founders promote it as a Facebook for the social elite. A few postings help to understand why. One person wrote, "I need to rent 20 very luxury sports cars for an event in Switzerland . . . The cars should be: Maserati—Ferrari—Lamborghini—Aston Martin ONLY!" Another announced: "If anyone is looking for a private island, I now have one available for purchase in Fiji."[99]

Social Class Around the World

Rising incomes in many economically developing countries, such as South Korea and China, coupled with decreasing prices for quality consumer goods and services, create explosive demand for luxury products or at least "affordable" versions of these goods. The biggest emerging markets go by the acronym **BRIC nations**: Brazil, Russia, India, China (and more recently South Africa). China and India alone account for more than 20 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP); 30 years ago this percentage was less than 5. In recent years the rapid growth has slowed as a result of a number of factors including the United States' newfound dominance in the oil industry and, ironically, the maturation of these economies (especially in China) from lower-priced, production oriented systems to greater levels of consumption as incomes rise. Still analysts expect overall growth to continue even if at a slower rate. In 2014, China overtook the United States as the largest economy in the world.[100]

This change fuels demand for mass-consumed products that still offer some degree of *panache*. Companies such as H&M, Zara, EasyJet, and L'Oréal provide creature comforts to a consumer segment that analysts label **mass class**. This term describes the hundreds of millions of global consumers who now enjoy a level of purchasing power that's sufficient to let them afford high-quality products—except for big-ticket items such as college educations, housing, or luxury cars. The mass-class market, for example, spawned several versions of affordable cars: Latin Americans have their Volkswagen Beetle (they affectionately call it *el huevito*, "the little egg"); Indian consumers have their Maruti 800 (it sells for as little as U.S. $4,860); and the Fiat Palio, the company's "world car," targets people in emerging countries such as Brazil, Argentina, India, China, and Turkey.[101]

Every society has some type of hierarchical class structure that determines people's access to products and services. Let's take a quick look at a few important ones.

China

An economic boom is creating a middle class of more than 130 million people that analysts project will grow to more than 400 million in 10 years. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao's Red Guards seized on even the smallest possessions—a pocket watch or silk scarf—as evidence of "bourgeois consciousness." Change came rapidly in the early 1990s, after Mao's successor Deng Xiaoping uttered the phrase that quickly became the credo of the new China: "To get rich is glorious."

Because costs in China are low, a family with an annual income below the U.S. poverty threshold of about $14,000 can enjoy middle-class comforts, including stylish clothes, Chinese-made color televisions, DVD players, and cell phones. Wealthier Chinese entrepreneurs indulge in Cuban Cohiba cigars that sell for $25 each, a quarter of the average Chinese laborer's monthly wage. In

bustling Shanghai, newly minted "yuppies" drop their kids off for golf lessons; visit Maserati and Ferrari showrooms; buy some luxury items from Louis Vuitton, Hugo Boss, or Prada; then pick up some Häagen-Dazs ice cream before they head to an Evian spa to unwind. The race to obtain the latest status symbols continues: People in Beijing sometimes marry complete strangers just to get their hands on a license plate, which is a highly valued commodity for the growing middle class. There is a lottery system to get new plates that allow you to drive in the city on certain days (heavy smog has caused the government to crack down on access), but very few winners. And while it's illegal to buy the coveted plates on the black market, you are allowed to transfer ownership to your spouse. Plates with lucky numbers are even more desirable![102]

Nike, which consumers in a survey named China's coolest brand, profits mightily from the rise of the Chinese middle class. Nike shoes are a symbol of success, and the company opens an average of 1.5 new stores a day there. The company worked for a long time to attain this status, starting when it outfitted top Chinese athletes and sponsored all the teams in China's pro basketball league. Still, becoming a fashion icon (and persuading consumers to spend twice the average monthly salary for a pair of shoes) is no mean feat in a country that's not exactly sports crazy. So Nike affiliated with the NBA (which began to televise games in China) and brought over players such as Michael Jordan for visits. Slowly but surely, in-the-know Chinese came to call sneakers "Nai-ke."[103]

Japan

Japan is a highly brand-conscious society where upscale, designer labels are incredibly popular. Although the devastation from the 2011 tsunami reduced demand for luxury goods among many Japanese, their love affair with top brands had started in the 1970s when the local economy was booming and many Japanese could buy Western luxury accessories for the first time. Some analysts say Japan's long slump since that time may have fostered a psychological need to splurge on small luxuries to give people the illusion of wealth and to forget their anxieties about the future. Single, working women are largely responsible for fueling Japan's luxury-goods spending; about three-quarters of Japanese women aged 25 to 29 work outside the home. These "office ladies" typically save money because they live with their parents, so this leaves them with cash on hand to spend on clothes, accessories, and vacations.[105]

The Middle East

In contrast to the Japanese, few Arabic women work. This makes a search for the latest in Western luxury brands a major leisure activity for those with money. A major expansion of Western luxury brands is underway across the Middle East, home to some of the fashion industry's best customers. High-end retailers such as Saks Fifth Avenue and Giorgio Armani operate opulent stores that cater to this attractive market. Like China, there also is a growing middle class of more than 150 million people. If the 22 countries in the Arab League were a single country, it would be the world's eighth-largest economy—bigger than India or Russia. It's also a young economy; more than half of the people are younger than 25 years of age.[106]

The United Kingdom

England is an extremely class-conscious country, and, at least until recently, inherited position and family background largely predetermined consumption patterns. Traditionally people defined three classes: upper, middle, and working. Members of

Marketing Pitfall

The quality of life has improved dramatically for many Chinese in the last few decades, but this sudden prosperity comes with a price tag. Before the country's financial transformation, most people were fairly equal (although poor), and the ratio of males to females was about even as well. Thus, it was not a big deal for matchmakers to arrange suitable matches between men and women; the Chinese called this process *mendang hudui*, meaning roughly "family doors of equal size." Most people never dated anyone other than their future spouse before they got married.

The economic boom upended this stable structure, so that now there are sharp inequalities of wealth. Roughly 300 million people have moved from rural areas to cities in the last 30 years. As a result the traditional matchmaker solution that paired members from an intimate community no longer is viable. To compound the problem, more Chinese women postpone marriage to pursue careers, and the gender gap is huge largely a result of the government's one-child policy that for years encouraged parents to have boys rather than girls. Researchers estimate that soon China will have a surplus of 24 million unmarried men. Many of them now search for a mate online as Chinese dating services bring in more than $300 million each year. Wealthy men buy their way out of the problem; in one case a company sent 200 women who enrolled in their service to a powerful executive so that he could select a bride. However, men of more modest means struggle to get the attention of potential mates, particularly if they are unable to afford an apartment in expensive cities like Beijing. And although women have a huge numerical advantage, they face strong pressure to find a suitable mate before they turn 28; to be single after this age stigmatizes them with the label "leftover woman."[104]

the upper class were educated at schools such as Eton and Oxford, and they spoke like Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady*. We can still find remnants of this rigid class structure. "Hooray Henrys" (wealthy young men) play polo at Windsor and hereditary peers still dominate the House of Lords.

However, the dominance of inherited wealth appears to have faded in Britain's traditionally aristocratic society, as British entrepreneurs like Sir Richard Branson (of the Virgin empire) redefine the economy. The United Kingdom was particularly hard hit by the Great Recession, and a new emphasis on frugality altered people's priorities. In addition, populist outrage grew after it came to light that legislators had billed the government for excessive expenses—among other abuses, British taxpayers footed a £2,000 bill for one M.P. to clean the moat surrounding his castle.[107]

The *Great British Class Survey* conducted by the BBC asked more than 161,000 people for their input about social class. The study concluded the number of distinct classes in the United Kingdom today has grown from three to seven. These range from the "elite" at the top who possess money, social connections, and upper-crust cultural preferences, to the *precariat* (precarious proletariat) at the bottom who live from day to day with severely constrained resources. The new middle categories include the "technical middle class," a group that has a lot of money but few social connections or cultural activity, and "emergent service workers," a young, urban group that has little money but a lot of social connections and cultural interests. Not all Britons agreed with the new classifications. As one wrote to a newspaper, "There are only two classes: those with tattoos, and those without."[108]

British consumers are well aware of a type of person they call **chavs.** This label refers to young, lower-class men and women who mix flashy brands and



Chavs are a common social class stereotype in England.
Source: JJ Augustin Inc., Publishers.

accessories from big names such as Burberry with track suits. Their style icons include soccer star David Beckham and his wife, Victoria (aka Posh Spice). Despite their (alleged) tackiness, some marketers like chavs because they spend a lot of their disposable income on fashion, food, and gadgets. France's Danone, which makes HP Sauce, a condiment the British have poured over bacon sandwiches and fries for a century, launched a series of ads to play up to the chav culture. One features a brawl over the sauce at a wedding buffet; another includes glammy soccer players' wives mingling cattily at a party. On the other hand the upscale Burberry brand was long a favorite of chavs, and its image is only starting to recover. As one author wrote, "a lot of people thought that Burberry would be worn by the person who mugged them." The association between chavs and Burberry hats and scarves got so bad that for a while some restaurants and clubs barred entry to anyone who wore the distinctive plaid design.[109]

India

India's economy is booming despite the global recession, and affluent consumers prize higher-end global brands—even though nearly half of India's population lives on less than $1.25 a day. Brands like Gucci, Jimmy Choo, and Hermès scramble to open stores in high-end hotels or new superluxury malls, where the management often stations guards at the doors to keep the destitute outside.[110] And trendy foreign dog breeds such as huskies, St. Bernards, and Alaskan Malamutes have become desirable symbols of wealth—even though the heat in Indian cities isn't exactly a friend to these pets.[111]

A media controversy illustrates the rapid changes in Indian society. *Vogue India* ran a 16-page spread of poor people surrounded by luxury goods: a toothless old woman holds a child who wears a Fendi bib, a woman and two other people ride on a motorbike as she sports a Hermès bag that sells for more than $10,000, a street beggar grips a Burberry umbrella. A columnist denounced the spread as "not just tacky but downright distasteful." The magazine's editor commented that the shoot's message is simply that "fashion is no longer a rich man's privilege. Anyone can carry it off and make it look beautiful."[112]

One of Bollywood's biggest stars, Shahrukh Khan, is "brand ambassador" for Tag Heuer watches, which cost thousands of dollars. He gives them away on the Indian version of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?,* which i*s* the show that also formed the basis for the hit movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. India's ascendancy is fairly recent; for decades after the country became independent from Britain, its economy was socialist and traditional with a rigid class hierarchy: Dalits, formerly known as the Untouchables, are at the bottom and forced into menial jobs, whereas Brahmins historically occupied the highest rung of the social ladder.[113]

Analysts project that soon there will be about 267 million middle-class Indian consumers, a growth of about 67 percent over just a 5-year period. Although the middle class currently represents less than 15 percent of India's population, it still accounts for purchases of about one-half of the cars, computers, and air conditioners in the country.[114] Today, young Indian consumers watch MTV and read international fashion magazines. They exert a strong influence on the country's rapid growth, especially because India's population is relatively young; 54 percent of the people are younger than 25 years of age.[115]

Brazil

Showing off wealth (if you have it) is an important part of Brazilian culture because these displays command respect. But the country is going through some hard times—numerous scandals involving prominent politicians and executives are making people more suspicious. Affluent Brazilians are starting to invest more in private treasures,

Marketing Pitfall

Research evidence shows that people who identify with a relatively low-status category desire objectives they associate with high status as a way to enhance social standing.[117] This desire to compensate can ironically work against these individuals in the long run. For example, nutritionists point to supersized food portions and megasized cups of sugary drinks as prime culprits in the obesity epidemic we see in the United States. A research project demonstrated an obstacle to battling this problem: Underprivileged consumers view larger-sized portions as status symbols. When study respondents were made to feel they had less power, they chose bigger food portions to compensate. They were even more likely to do so when their choices were public. The researchers note the irony of this situation: The short-term status display may ultimately lead to even lower status because of the stigma of obesity in our society.[118]



Counterfeit luxury goods are a major headache for companies that cater to high-end customers.
Source: Neil Setchfield/Alamy Stock Photo.

such as expensive works of art that only their friends and family will see. Considering that thieves on average steal a car about every 2½ minutes in major cities, it's probably not a bad idea to be a bit subtle.[116]

Status Signaling

As we discussed previously, the rise of a *mass class* market means that many luxury products have gone down-market. Does this mean that Americans no longer yearn for status symbols? Hardly. The market continues to roll out ever-pricier goods and services, from $12,000 mother–baby diamond tennis bracelet sets to $600 jeans, $800 haircuts, and $400 bottles of wine. Although it seems that almost everyone can flaunt a designer handbag (or at least a counterfeit version with a convincing logo), Brazil's wealthiest consumers employ 9,000 personal chefs, visit plastic surgeons, and send their children to $400-an-hour math tutors. A sociologist explained, "Whether or not someone has a flat-screen TV is going to tell you less than if you look at the services they use, where they live and the control they have over other people's labor, those who are serving them."[122]

The social analyst Thorstein Veblen first discussed the motivation to consume for the sake of consuming at the turn of the 20th century. For Veblen, we buy things to create **invidious distinction**; this means that we use them to inspire envy in others through our display of wealth or power. Veblen coined the term **conspicuous consumption** to refer to people's desires to provide prominent visible evidence of their ability to afford luxury goods. The material excesses of his time motivated Veblen's outlook. Veblen wrote in the era of the "Robber Barons," where the likes of J. P. Morgan, Henry Clay Frick, and William Vanderbilt built massive financial empires and flaunted their wealth as they competed to throw the most lavish party. Some of these events were legendary, as this account describes:

Marketing Pitfall

Luxury goods often serve as status symbols, but the proliferation of inexpensive counterfeit products threatens to diminish their value ("Hey buddy, wanna buy a 'genuine' Rolex for $20?"). Fakes are a major headache for many manufacturers, especially in Asia; Officials in China estimate that 15 to 20 percent of the products made there are counterfeit.[120]

How do people who bought the real thing react when they see imitations of their prized handbags or watches parading by them on the street? Researchers who interviewed consumers who purchased luxury fashion brands in India and Thailand identified three coping strategies:

1. **Flight**—They stop using the brand because they don't want to be mislabeled as a lesser-status person who buys fake brands.
2. **Reclamation**—They go out of their way to emphasize their long relationship with the brand, but express concern that its image will be tarnished.
3. **Abranding**—They disguise their luxury items in the belief that truly high-status people do not need to display expensive logos, whereas those who do betray lower status.[121]

> There were tales, repeated in the newspapers, of dinners on horseback; of banquets for pet dogs; of hundred-dollar bills folded into guests' dinner napkins; of a hostess who attracted attention by seating a chimpanzee at her table; of centerpieces in which lightly clad living maidens swam in glass tanks, or emerged from huge pies; of parties at which cigars were ceremoniously lighted with flaming banknotes of large denominations.[123]

Sounds like they really lived it up back in the old days, right? Well, maybe the more things change, the more they stay the same: The wave of corporate scandals involving companies such as AIG, Enron, WorldCom, and Tyco infuriated many consumers when they discovered that some top executives lived it up even as other employees were laid off. One account of a $1 million birthday party the chief executive of Tyco threw for his wife is eerily similar to a Robber Baron shindig: The party reportedly had a gladiator theme and featured an ice sculpture of Michelangelo's *David* with vodka streaming from his penis into crystal glasses. The company also furnished the executive's New York apartment with such "essentials" as a $6,000 shower curtain, a $2,200 gilt wastebasket, and a $17,100 "traveling toilette box."[124]

This phenomenon of conspicuous consumption was, for Veblen, most evident among what he termed the **leisure class**; people for whom productive work is taboo. In Marxist terms, such an attitude reflects a desire to link oneself to ownership or control of the means of production, rather than to the production itself. Those who control these resources, therefore, avoid any evidence that they actually have to work for a living, as the term *idle rich* suggests.

To Veblen, wives are an economic resource. He criticized the "decorative" role of women, as rich men showered them with expensive clothes, pretentious homes, and a life of leisure as a way to advertise their own wealth (note that today he might have argued the same for a smaller number of husbands). Today we refer to these women as **trophy wives**. Fashions such as high-heeled shoes, tight corsets, billowing trains on dresses, and elaborate hairstyles all conspired to ensure that wealthy women could barely move without assistance, much less perform manual labor. Similarly, the Chinese practice of foot-binding prevented female members of the



This French ad suggests that even dogs marry "trophy wives."
Source: Courtesy of CLM-BBDO and Mars Petfood, Clive Stewart Photography.

aristocracy from walking; servants carried them from place to place. In recent years the tables have turned as older women—who increasingly boast the same incomes and social capital as their male peers—seek out younger men as arm candy. These so-called **cougars** (a term popularized by the TV show *Cougar Town*) are everywhere; surveys estimate that about one-third of women older than age 40 date younger men.[125]

Consumers engage in conspicuous consumption as a way to display status markers, yet the prominence of these markers varies from products with large recognizable emblems to those with no logo at all. Those "in the know" often can recognize a subtle status marker when another member of their elite group displays it, such as the distinctive design of a bag or watch—these are "quiet signals." In contrast, some people may feel the need to almost hit others over the head with their bling; they use "loud signals."

One set of researchers labels these differences **brand prominence**. They assign consumers to one of four consumption groups (patricians, parvenus, poseurs, and proletarians) based on their wealth and need for status. When they looked at data on luxury goods, the authors found different classes gravitated toward different types of brand prominence. Brands like Louis Vuitton, Gucci, and Mercedes vary in terms of how blatant their status appeals (e.g., prominent logos) are in advertisements and on the products themselves—or in other words, in the type of **status signaling** they employ.

Thinking back to our discussion about "old money" compared with "new money," for example, it's not surprising that those who are wealthier and don't have a high need for status (patricians) rely on "quiet signals" and likely will be put off by excessive displays. Marketers for status brands need to understand these distinctions because their customers may or may not value products with explicit logos and other highly visible cues that signal conspicuous consumption.[126] Figure 12.3 summarizes these four types and provides one set of contrasting products the researchers used in their study: quiet versus loud Gucci sunglasses.

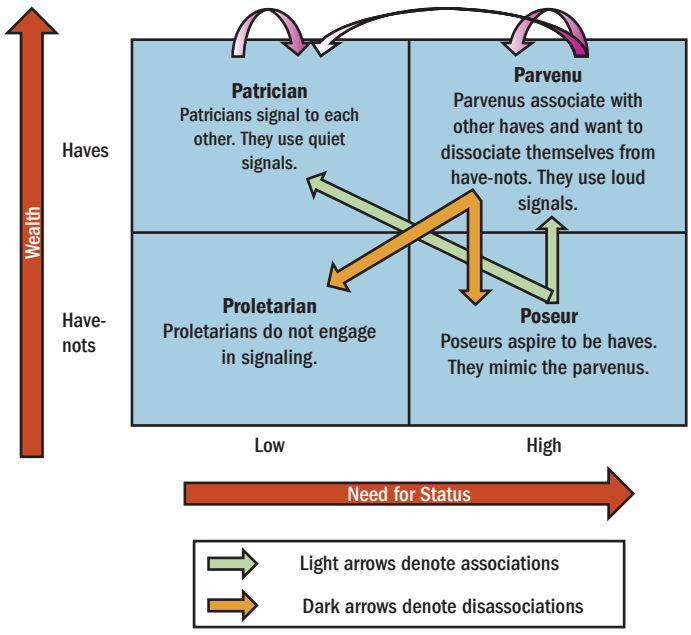






Figure 12-3 A TYPOLOGY OF STATUS SIGNALING

Note: "Quiet" sunglasses (L) do not include a prominent designer logo, while "Loud" (R) sunglasses do.

Source: Young Jee Han, Joseph C. Nunes, and Xavier Drèze (2010), "Signaling Status with Luxury Goods: The Role of Brand Prominence," *Journal of Marketing* 74 (July), 15–30, from Figures 2 and 3.

Veblen's inspiration came from anthropological studies of the Kwakiutl Indians, who lived in the Pacific Northwest. At a *potlatch* ceremony, the host showed off his wealth and gave extravagant presents to the guests. The more he gave away, the greater his status. Sometimes, the host employed an even more radical strategy to flaunt his wealth. He would publicly *destroy* some of his property just to demonstrate how much he had.

And the plot thickens: Because guests had to reciprocate by giving a gift of equal value, the host could humiliate a poorer rival with an invitation to a lavish *potlatch*. The hapless guest would eventually be forced into bankruptcy because he needed to give away as much as the host, even though he could not afford to do so. If this practice sounds "primitive," think for a moment about many modern weddings. Parents commonly invest huge sums of money to throw a lavish party and compete with others for the distinction of giving their daughter the "best" or most extravagant wedding, even if they have to dip into their retirement savings to do it.

Like the *potlatch* ritual, in modern times our desire to convince others we have a surplus of resources creates the need for us to exhibit the evidence that we do. Accordingly, we may prioritize consumption activities that use up as many resources as possible in nonconstructive pursuits. This *conspicuous waste*, in turn, shows others that we have assets to spare. Veblen wrote, "We are told of certain Polynesian chiefs, who, under the stress of good form, preferred to starve rather than carry their food to their mouths with their own hands."[127]

As the competition to accumulate status symbols escalates, sometimes the best tactic is to switch gears and go in reverse. One way to do this is to deliberately *avoid* status symbols—that is, to seek status by mocking it. Social scientists call this sophisticated form of conspicuous consumption **parody display**.[128] Hence, the popularity of old, ripped blue jeans (or more likely, the ones companies stonewash and treat so that they *look* old and ripped), "utility" vehicles such as Jeeps among the upper classes (like the Caldwells in the chapter opener), and brands with a strong blue-collar heritage like Von Dutch truckers' hats and Red Wing boots.

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. **Our confidence in our future, as well as in the overall economy, determines how freely we spend and the types of products we buy.**

   The field of behavioral economics studies how consumers decide what to do with their money. Consumer confidence—the state of mind consumers have about their own personal situation, as well as their feelings about their overall economic prospects—helps to determine whether they will purchase goods and services, take on debt, or save their money.

2. **We group consumers into social classes that say a lot about where they stand in society.**

   A consumer's *social class* refers to his or her standing in society. Factors including education, occupation, and income determine the class to which we belong. Virtually all groups make distinctions among members

in terms of relative superiority, power, and access to valued resources. This social stratification creates a status hierarchy in which consumers prefer some goods to others.

Although income is an important indicator of social class, the relationship is far from perfect. Factors such as place of residence, cultural interests, and worldview also determine social class. As income distributions change around the world, it is getting more difficult to distinguish among members of social classes; many products succeed because they appeal to a newly emerging group that marketers call the *mass class* (people with incomes high enough to purchase luxury items, at least on a small scale).

3. Individuals' desires to make a statement about their social class, or the class to which they hope to belong, influence the products they like and dislike.

Conspicuous consumption, when a person flaunts his status by deliberately using up valuable resources, is one way to "buy up" to a higher social class. *Nouveau riches,* whose relatively recent acquisition of income rather than ancestry or breeding accounts for their enhanced social mobility, are the most likely to do this. We use status symbols (usually scarce goods or services) to communicate our standing to others. Parody display occurs when we seek status by deliberately avoiding fashionable products.

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REVIEW

12-1 How have women contributed to the overall rise in income in our society?

12-2 Define *discretionary income*.

12-3 How does consumer confidence influence consumer behavior?

12-4 What is a *pecking order*?

12-5 What is *social class*? Is it different from income? If so, how?

12-6 Define *social mobility* and describe the different forms it takes.

12-7 What one variable is the best indicator of social class? What are some other important indicators?

12-8 What is *income inequality*, and why is it a problem?

12-9 Why might a person's social class not change when he or she earns more money?

12-10 What are some of the problems we encounter when we try to measure social class?

12-11 How do the worldviews of blue-collar and white-collar consumers differ?

12-12 What is a *taste culture*?

12-13 Describe the difference between a restricted and an elaborated code. Give an example of each.

12-14 What is cultural capital, and why is enrolling in etiquette class a way to accumulate it?

12-15 How do you differentiate between "old money" versus "*nouveau riche*" consumers?

12-16 What roles do status symbols play in purchase decisions?

12-17 What is *conspicuous consumption*? Give a current example.

12-18 What is a current example of parody display?

12-19 Describe what we mean by the term *mass class* and summarize what causes this phenomenon.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

12-20 Sears, JC Penney, and Walmart tried hard in recent years to upgrade their images and appeal to higher-class consumers. How successful have these efforts been? Do you believe this strategy is wise?

12-21 What are some of the obstacles to measuring social class in today's society? Discuss some ways to get around these obstacles.

12-22 What consumption differences might you expect to observe between a family we characterize as underprivileged and one whose income is average for its social class?

12-23 How do you assign people to social classes, or do you at all? What consumption cues do you use (e.g., clothing, speech, cars, and so on) to determine social standing?

12-24 In today's economy, it's become somewhat vulgar to flaunt your money—if you have any left. Do you think this means that status symbols like luxury products are passé? Why or why not?

12-25 Thorstein Veblen argued that men used women as "trophy wives" to display their wealth. Is this argument still valid today?

12-26 Research suggests that social class influences how much compassion people show to others who need help. For example, one study reported that luxury car drivers were more likely to cut off other motorists instead of waiting for their turn at the intersection. Another showed that less-affluent people are more likely to agree with such statements as, "I often notice people who need help," and "It's important to take care of people who are vulnerable." Other studies have demonstrated that upper-class people are not as good at recognizing others' emotions. One explanation is that more resources provide a sense of independence; the less we have to rely on others, the less we care about their feelings.[129] Do you agree that wealthy people are less caring? Why or why not?

12-27 This chapter observes that some marketers find "greener pastures" when they target low-income people. How ethical is it to single out consumers who cannot afford to waste their precious resources on discretionary items? Under what circumstances should we encourage or discourage this segmentation strategy?

▶ APPLY

12-28 Compile a list of occupations and ask a sample of students in a variety of majors (both business and nonbusiness) to rank the prestige of these jobs. Can you detect any differences in these rankings as a function of students' majors?

12-29 Compile a collection of ads that depict consumers of different social classes. What generalizations can you make about the reality of these ads and about the media in which they appear?

CASE STUDY

Success at the Bottom of the Pyramid? Unilever & P&G Show It's Possible

Consumer behavior is influenced by internal and external factors. One external factor that sets real boundaries for consumers is their level of income. Some marketers refer to strategies directed at different income tiers as targeting certain levels of a pyramid. Marketing to the "bottom of the pyramid," focusing on consumers with very limited financial means, became well-known in 2004 when C. K. Prahalad wrote the book *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid*. He envisioned companies marketing affordable products to the billions of consumers around the world with limited income and unmet needs. He believed that companies could help consumers and be profitable at the same time.[130]

The number of potential bottom of the pyramid (BOP) customers worldwide is huge, currently estimated at four billion and projected to grow to six billion over the next 40 years. Since these consumers earn less than US$2 per day, successful BOP strategies are usually focused on offering low cost/low price products in smaller sizes. The strategies may also include innovative distribution or financing, and may involve educating consumers on the use of the product.[131,132]

India has been a major target for BOP marketers. When Prahalad's book was published in 2004, there were over 1.1 billion residents there. As recently as 2013, the World Bank estimated that 30 percent of the population was under the $1.90 a day BOP level.[133]

Unilever, maker of Dove soap, has been one of the leaders in BOP marketing in India. It sold the company's Wheel detergent as a "sachet"—a single-use package offered at a low price and packaged in a way that was consistent with the shopping habits of Indian consumers who often shop daily for necessities.[134] To spread the word about Wheel, Unilever used an unorthodox sales force: 70,000 *Shakti* women to go into 165,000 rural villages to sell the product.[135] Shakti means "strength" or "power" in Hindi and these village women provided the power of existing relationships and an intimate knowledge of communication styles and the geography, helping sales of the packets to reach a quantity of 27 billion per year.[136,137] Another Unilever program sold small sizes of its Lifebuoy soap and involved educating 300 million consumers about the health benefits of washing hands.[138,139]

One of Unilever's chief rivals, P&G, took notice of Unilever's success in India and worked to find ways to capture market share in a category in which they were the global market leader: razors and blades.[140] They felt that there was a significant opportunity to meet the shaving needs of Indian men at the bottom of the pyramid. Unfortunately, early efforts, like its Vector razor, were undermined by a misunderstanding of the shaving process for men in India, many of whom did not have access to running water. More recently, P&G introduced the Gillette Guard. This razor was developed based on 3,000 hours of research over 18 months, some of it conducted in the homes of low-income Indian men. They asked the men about their shaving rituals and observed them in the process of shaving. What P&G found is that they typically shave sitting on the floors of their huts with no electricity, using a bowl of water and no mirror. Their primary objective is to avoid cutting themselves. This research proved to be invaluable in the development of a new razor.[141]

The Gillette Guard was the result of what Alberto Carvalho, Vice President, Global Gillette, described as a focus on not only producing a razor that would meet consumer needs, but also doing it at "ruthless cost." This meant designing a stripped down single blade razor with only four components versus the 25 found in more sophisticated razors. Jim Keighley, associate director for product engineering, says "I can remember talking about changes to this product that were worth a thousandth, or two thousandths of a cent." In the end they were able to produce a razor that cost one third of the previously introduced Vector and sold for 15 rupees (34 cents) with razor blades priced at 5 rupees (12 cents).[142]

As a result of its painstaking research and attention to the needs of this unique target audience, P&G's market share of razors and blades has grown significantly in India and at a faster rate than any other P&G brand in India. Despite the challenges they encountered it appears that the Gillette Guard can be considered a bottom of the pyramid success story.

However, bottom of the pyramid strategies are not always as workable as companies would have imagined. Some companies missed the mark because of low margins that would not support the higher costs of doing business in a BOP market, such as distribution and the need for "high-touch" sales and marketing.[143] In some instances the only way to make the BOP marketer's business model work over the long term was to partner with a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that could help them gain access to consumers through established connections within countries.[144]

The level of poverty in India is dramatically different today than it was when companies like Unilever and P&G

first began marketing there, with the most recent World Bank estimate of the BOP population at just a little over 5 percent. That still represents over 71 million people, and other countries have percentages as high as 85 percent.[145] Considering the worldwide need and opportunity for low cost products, companies will likely continue to pursue innovative strategies to reach consumers at the bottom of the pyramid.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 12-1 Using the "4A's" framework in Figure 12.1, analyze the considerations that went into the development of the Gillette Guard razor for the Indian market.

CS 12-2 Are companies targeting the bottom of the pyramid taking advantage of vulnerable consumers with limited resources?

CS 12-3 More than half of U.S. workers earn less than $30,000 a year, barely above the poverty line for a family of five. What would you recommend to a company looking to target bottom of the pyramid consumers in the United States?

MyLab Marketing

If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

12-30 Status symbols are products, such as Rolex watches or expensive sports cars, that we value because they show others how much money or prestige we have. Do you believe that your peer group values status symbols? Why or why not? If yes, what are the products that you think are status symbols for consumers your age? Do you agree with the assertion that a cell phone is a status symbol for many young people?

12-31 As we continue to emerge from The Great Recession, many people live frugally; they cut back on visits to restaurants, buy fewer high-end clothes and other luxury goods, and hold onto their cars much longer. Are we witnessing a long-term shift in consumer behavior, or do you believe this is just a temporary situation?

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13 Subcultures

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why:

- **13-1** Consumer identity derives from "we" as well as "I."
- **13-2** Our memberships in ethnic, racial, and religious subcultures often guide our consumption choices.
- **13-3** Marketers increasingly use religious and spiritual themes to talk to consumers.
- **13-4** Our traditional notions about families are outdated.
- **13-5** Birds of a feather flock together in place-based subcultures.



Source: Evok20/Shutterstock.

Maria wakes up early on Saturday morning and braces herself for a long day of errands and chores. As usual, her mother is at work and expects Maria to do the shopping and help prepare dinner for the big family gathering tonight. Of course, her older brother Orlando would never be asked to do the grocery shopping or help out in the kitchen; these are women's jobs.

Family gatherings make a lot of work. Maria wishes that her mother would use prepared foods once in a while, especially on a Saturday when Maria has an errand or two of her own to do. But no, her mother insists on preparing most of her food from scratch. She rarely uses any convenience products, to ensure that the meals she serves are of the highest quality.

Resigned, Maria watches a *telenovela* (soap opera) on Univision while she dresses and then she heads down to the *carnicería* (small grocery store) to buy a newspaper—almost 40 different Spanish newspapers are published in her area, and she likes to pick up new ones occasionally. Then Maria buys the grocery items her mother wants. The list is full of well-known brand names that she gets all the time, such as Casera and Goya, so she's able to finish quickly. As she's getting dressed to meet her friends at the *mercado* (shopping center) before the whole crowd arrives, she downloads the latest Latin single by Cardi B.

Maria smiles to herself: Los Angeles is a great place to live, and what could be better than spending a lively, fun evening with *la familia*?

Ethnic and Racial Subcultures

OBJECTIVE 13-1
Consumer identity derives from "we" as well as "I."

Sí, Maria lives in Los Angeles, not Mexico City. More than one in four Californians are Hispanic, and overall the state has more nonwhite than white residents. In fact, more people watch Spanish-language Univision in Los Angeles than any other network; it's the fifth-largest network in the United States.[1]

Maria and other Hispanic Americans have much in common with members of other racial and ethnic groups who live in the United States. They observe the same national holidays, the country's economic health affects what they spend, and they may root for Team USA in the Olympics. Nonetheless, although U.S. citizenship provides the raw material for some consumption decisions, enormous variations in the social fabric of the country profoundly affect many others. The United States truly is a "melting pot" of hundreds of diverse groups, from Italian and Irish Americans to Mormons and Seventh-Day Adventists.

As we saw in Chapter 11, groups exert a lot of influence on our individual consumer decisions. Still, some of our affiliations are more central to our essence than are others.[2] In this chapter we'll look at some of the external linkages that play a big role in defining who we are and what we value: gender, race/ethnicity, religion, age, and where we live. Each of these is a **subculture**, which is a group whose members share significant beliefs and common preferences.

The rapidly growing diversity of U.S. culture is one of the most important drivers of change in this century. As of 2015, the majority of babies born in America are non-Caucasian. Over the next 45 years, the Bureau expects the Hispanic population to more than double; by 2060 almost one in three Americans will identify as Hispanic. The Asian population will double during the same time period. Furthermore, traditional subcultural categories are breaking down. The Census Bureau also predicts that by 2050, people who identify themselves as multiracial will make up almost 4 percent of the U.S. population. Among U.S. children, the multiracial population has increased almost 50 percent, to 4.2 million, since 2000, making it the fastest-growing youth group in the country. The number of people of all ages who identified themselves as both white and black soared by 134 percent since 2000 to 1.8 million people.[3] Our country truly is a "melting pot" of people who belong to many different racial and ethnic subcultures. That helps to explain why about 6 percent of people who filled out the last census didn't select one of the race categories the form provided.[4]

Subcultural Stereotypes

OBJECTIVE 13-2
Our memberships in ethnic, racial, and religious subcultures often guide our consumption choices.

Adidas provoked outrage when the company posted a photo of a new design, the JS Roundhouse Mids, on its Facebook page. The shoes come with bright orange shackles and the tagline, "Got a sneaker game so hot you lock your kicks to your ankles?" Many users complained that this image is highly offensive to African Americans because it evokes imagery of slavery and chain gangs. The company claimed the design had nothing to do with these issues, but the damage was done.[5]

In the past, it was fairly common for marketers to use racial or ethnic symbolism as shorthand to convey certain product attributes. Before these actions became taboo, they often employed crude and unflattering images when they depicted African Americans as subservient or Mexicans as bandits.[6] Aunt Jemima sold pancake mix and

Rastus was a grinning black chef who pitched Cream of Wheat hot cereal. The Gold Dust Twins were black urchins who peddled a soap powder for Lever Brothers, and Pillsbury hawked powdered drink mixes via characters such as Chinese Cherry—who had buckteeth—and Injun Orange.[7] As the civil rights movement gave more power to minority groups and their rising economic status began to command marketers' respect, these negative stereotypes began to disappear. Frito-Lay responded to protests by the Hispanic community and stopped using the Frito Bandito character in 1971, and Quaker Foods gave Aunt Jemima a makeover in 1989.

Many subcultures have powerful stereotypes the general public associates with them. In these cases, outsiders assume that group members possess certain traits. Unfortunately, a communicator can cast the same trait as either positive or negative, depending on his or her biases or intentions. For example, the Scottish stereotype in the United States is largely positive, so we tend to look favorably on their (supposed) frugality. The 3M company uses Scottish imagery to denote value (e.g., Scotch tape), as does Scotch Inns, a motel chain that offers inexpensive lodging. However, the Scottish "personality" might carry quite different connotations to the British or Irish. One person's "thrifty" is another's "stingy."

Ethnicity and Acculturation

Although some people feel uncomfortable with the notion that marketers should explicitly take into account people's racial and ethnic differences when they formulate their strategies, the reality is that these subcultural memberships do shape many needs and wants. Research indicates, for example, that members of minority groups find an advertising spokesperson from their own group more trustworthy, and this enhanced credibility in turn translates into more positive brand attitudes.[8] However, marketers need to avoid the temptation to paint all members of an ethnic or racial group with the same brush; not only are these generalizations inaccurate, but they also are likely to turn off the very people a company wants to reach.[9]

One important subcultural difference is how abstract or literal the group is. Sociologists make a basic distinction: In a **high-context culture**, group members tend to be tightly knit, and they infer meanings that go beyond the spoken word. Symbols and gestures, rather than words, carry much of the weight of the message. In contrast, people who belong to a **low-context culture** are more literal. Compared to Anglos (who tend to be low-context), many minority cultures are high context and have strong oral traditions, so consumers are more sensitive to nuances in advertisements that go beyond the message copy.

Acculturation is the process of movement and adaptation to one country's cultural environment by a person from another country.[10] In contrast, **enculturation** is the process we each undergo to learn about our own native culture. This is an important issue for marketers due to our increasingly global society. As people move from place to place, they may quickly assimilate to their new homes, or they may resist this blending process and choose to insulate themselves from the mainstream culture. It's typical for a new arrival in the United States, for example, to feel ambivalence or conflict about relinquishing old ways (and consumer behaviors) for new ones. Home Depot segments its campaigns when the retailer speaks to the Hispanic market; it creates different ads for "acculturated Hispanics" (second- or third-generation Americans) than it shows to consumers who almost always speak Spanish.[11]

A study of Mexican immigrants that used the research technique of *ethnography* probed their acculturation as they adapted to life in the United States.[12] Indeed, after the researchers interviewed these people in their natural settings, they reported a lot of ambivalence. On the one hand, they are happy about the improvements in the

quality of their lives because of greater job availability and educational opportunities for their children. On the other hand, they report bittersweet feelings about leaving Mexico. They miss their friends, their holidays, their food, and the comfort that comes from living in familiar surroundings.

Many factors affect the nature of the transition process. Individual differences, such as whether the person speaks English, influence how rocky the adjustment will be. The person's contacts with **acculturation agents**—people and institutions that teach the ways of a culture—are also crucial. Some of these agents come from the *culture of origin* (in this case, Mexico), including family, friends, the church, local businesses, and Spanish-language media that keep the consumer in touch with his or her country of origin. Other agents come from the *culture of immigration* (in this case, the United States) and help the consumer to learn how to navigate in the new environment. These include public schools, English-language media, and government agencies.

Several processes come into play as immigrants adapt to their new surroundings. *Movement* refers to the factors that motivate people to physically uproot themselves from one location and go to another. In this case, people leave Mexico because of the scarcity of jobs and the desire to provide a good education for their children. On arrival, immigrants encounter a need for *translation.* This means they try to master a set of rules for operating in the new environment, whether it's learning how to decipher a different currency or figuring out the social meanings of unfamiliar clothing styles. This cultural learning leads to a process of *adaptation*, by which people form new consumption patterns. For example, some of the Mexican women in the study started to wear shorts and pants once they settled in the United States, although people in Mexico frown on this practice.

During the acculturation process, many immigrants undergo *assimilation*, during which they adopt products, habits, and values they identify with the mainstream culture. At the same time, there is an attempt at *maintenance* of practices they associate with the culture of origin. Immigrants stay in touch with people in their country, and like Maria, many continue to eat Hispanic foods and read Spanish-language newspapers. Their continued identification with Mexican culture may cause *resistance* because they resent the pressure to submerge their Mexican identities and take on new roles. Finally, immigrants (voluntarily or not) tend to exhibit *segregation*; they are likely to live and shop in places physically separated from mainstream Anglo consumers. These processes illustrate that ethnicity is a fluid concept and that members of a subculture constantly recreate its boundaries.



Disney's newest Princess, Elena of Avalor, is an acculturation agent for Latina girls.
Source: Disney Channel/Disney ABC Television Group/Getty Images.

The **progressive learning model** helps us to understand the acculturation process. This perspective assumes that people gradually learn a new culture as they increasingly come in contact with it. Thus, we expect that when people acculturate, they will mix the practices of their original culture with those of their new or **host culture**.[13] Research that examines such factors as shopping orientation, the importance people place on various product attributes, media preference, and brand loyalty generally supports this pattern.[14] When researchers take into account the intensity of ethnic identification, they find that consumers who retain a strong ethnic identification differ from their more assimilated counterparts in these ways:[15]

- They have a more negative attitude toward business in general (probably caused by frustration because of relatively low income levels).
- They access more media that's in their native language.
- They are more brand loyal.
- They are more likely to prefer brands with prestige labels.
- They are more likely to buy brands that specifically advertise to their ethnic group.

The acculturation process occurs even when we relocate from one place to another within the same country. If you have ever moved (and it's likely you have), you no doubt remember how difficult it was to give up old habits and friends and adapt to what people in your new location do.

A study of Turkish people who moved from the countryside to an urban environment illustrates how people cope with change and unfamiliar circumstances. The authors discuss a process of **warming**, which they describe as transforming objects and places into those that feel cozy, hospitable, and authentic. The study's informants described what happened as they tried to turn a cold and unfamiliar house into a home that is *güzel* ("beautiful and good," "modern and warm"). In this context, that means they integrated symbols of their former village life into their new homes: They blanketed them with the embroidered, crocheted, and lace textiles that people traditionally make by hand in the villages for brides' dowries. The researchers reported that migrants' homes contained far more of these pieces than they would have in their village homes because they used them to adorn their new modern appliances. The dowry textiles symbolize traditional norms and social networks of friends and family in the villages, so they link the "cold" modern objects with the owner's past. Thus, the unfamiliar becomes familiar.[16]

We can see how the process of acculturation slowly but steadily tends to erode identification with a person's original culture as they assimilate into their host culture when we look at how Hispanics in the United States think about their identities. A high intermarriage rate and a declining number of immigrants from Latin America reduce the likelihood that younger people call themselves Hispanic or Latino. While 93 percent of immigrant Hispanics have a Hispanic spouse, only 35 percent of third-generation Hispanics do. Roughly 10 percent of American adults with Hispanic ancestry do not even consider themselves members of this subculture. And, while 40 million people in the U.S. say they speak Spanish in their home today, among self-identified Hispanics the share who speak it at home is in decline.[17] Overall, many Hispanics don't think of themselves as distinctly Latino or American, but rather somewhere in the middle or **ambicultural**.[18]

Of course, it's not unusual for consumers who don't belong to a subculture to use products they associate with that group. **Deethnicization** occurs when a product we link to a specific ethnic group detaches itself from its roots and appeals to other



Green bagels to celebrate St. Patrick's Day illustrate the concept of deethnicization.
Source: J.R. Bale/123RF.

groups as well. Think about the popularity of bagels, a staple of Jewish cuisine that's mass-marketed today. Recent variations include jalapeño bagels, blueberry bagels, and even a green bagel for St. Patrick's Day.[19] Bagels now account for 3 to 6 percent of all U.S. breakfasts, and bagel franchisers such as Bruegger's Corporation and the Einstein/Noah Bagel Corporation operate hundreds of stores in cities that had never heard of a bagel just a few years ago.[20]

The dominant U.S. culture historically exerted pressure on immigrants to divest themselves of their origins and integrate with mainstream society. As President Theodore Roosevelt put it in the early part of the 20th century, "We welcome the German or the Irishman who becomes an American. We have no use for the German or the Irishman who remains such."[21]

Indeed, there is a tendency for ethnic groups with a relatively longer history in the United States to view themselves as more mainstream as they relax their identification with their country of origin. When the U.S. Census asked respondents to write up to two ancestries that defined their background, the results showed a clear decline in the number of people who identified themselves as of Irish, German, or other European origin. Compared to other subcultures, more people from these countries simply choose to call themselves "American."[22]

The "Big Three" American Ethnic Subcultures

African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans account for much of the current growth of the United States. The Hispanic population is now the largest ethnic subculture.[23] Asian Americans, though much smaller in absolute numbers, are the fastest-growing racial group.[24]

African Americans

African Americans make up more than 13 percent of the U.S. population.[25] Many marketers recognize the huge impact of this racial subculture and work hard to identify products and services that will appeal to these consumers. The toy market is no exception; children tend to gravitate toward toys and characters that look like

them. The Disney TV show Doc McStuffins that stars an African American character who fixes toys in her backyard clinic illustrates this appeal. The blockbuster show sold about $500 million in merchandise last year. Its success reflects demographic changes in the United States that create opportunities for a diversity of ethnic characters.[26]

Procter & Gamble launched a "My Black Is Beautiful" program for African American women after the company's research showed that these women think mainstream media does not represent them very well; three-quarters of the women the company surveyed said programs and ads portray them more negatively than other racial groups and that they worry about the negative impact these messages will have on teens.[27]

Research by Unilever illustrates how the body image dynamics we discussed in Chapter 6 vary across subcultures; the personal care products company found that skin takes on a deeper meaning for African Americans. In a poll it ran in *Essence* magazine,



Hispanic consumers are rapidly entering the mainstream market.
Source: Courtesy of Latina Magazine.

the company asked more than 1,400 African American women aged 18 to 64 to describe their skin, and the most common response was "beautiful" (59 percent). Another 30 percent described their skin as "strong." The survey also found that African American women rank skin as "most important to them" (49 percent); more so than their hair, figure, makeup, and clothes. About one-third say their skin is a source of their heritage, one-fourth say it's a source of pride, and "almost half of African American women say their skin tells a story of who they are and identifies them." This deep attachment is clear in posted comments such as "My skin is my life's historian," and "My skin represents the blending of my parents, an outward expression of their love."[28]

Hispanic Americans

Macy's launched a colorful new line of clothing and accessories with the hot Mexican pop star Thalía Sodi. Kmart sells a celebrity line for Hispanic women called Sofia by Sofia Vergara, named for the star of the popular television show *Modern Family*. Kohl's offers a clothing line with Jennifer Lopez.[29] Amazon launched a Spanish-language version of Amazon.com, perhaps based on research that shows Hispanics tend to shop online more than non-Hispanics for beauty and general household products.[30]



The Mexican pop star Thalía Sodi has a line of clothing and accessories at Macy's in the United States.
Source: Splash News/Newscom.

As the attention these major retailers are showering on this subculture shows, today many major corporations avidly court Hispanic consumers. No surprise: The 2010 Census reported a record 50 million Hispanics, or one in every six U.S. residents; this was a 42 percent increase from the 2000 Census. Hispanics are now the nation's second-largest consumer market after white non-Hispanics. They also are geographically concentrated, which makes it easier for marketers to reach them. About half of Hispanic consumers live in California and Texas. The other six states having more than 1 million Hispanics are Florida, New York, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, and Colorado.[31] Note: The umbrella term **Hispanic** describes people of many different backgrounds. Nearly 60 percent of Hispanic Americans are of Mexican descent. The next largest group, Puerto Ricans, make up just less than 10 percent of Hispanics. Other groups the Census includes in this category are Central Americans, Dominicans, South Americans, and Cubans.

In some ways, this growing segment also resembles our idealized concept of 1950s America. On average Hispanic consumers are young (their median age is about where the whole nation was in 1955) and they more often live in large, traditional, married-with-children families where grandparents log a lot of time. They're increasingly moving to the suburbs, they tend to be community oriented, and they have high aspirations for their children. The Hispanic birth rate went down dramatically in the years since The Great Recession, but this subculture continues to exert a major influence on U.S. culture and consumer activity.[32]

Many initial efforts to market to Hispanic Americans were, to say the least, counterproductive. Companies bumbled in their efforts to translate advertising adequately or to compose copy that captured the nuances advertisers intended. These mistakes do not occur so much anymore because marketers are more sophisticated when they talk to this segment and they tend to involve Hispanics in advertising production to ensure that they get it right. These translation mishaps slipped through before Anglos got their acts together:[33]

- The Perdue slogan, "It takes a tough man to make a tender chicken," translated as "It takes a sexually excited man to make a chick affectionate."
- Budweiser was the "queen of beers."
- Braniff (now defunct) promoted the comfortable leather seats on its airplanes with the headline, *Sentado en cuero*, which translates as "Sit naked."
- Coors beer's slogan to "get loose with Coors" appeared in Spanish as "get the runs with Coors."

Asian Americans

The problems U.S. marketers encountered when they first tried to reach the Hispanic market popped up again when they began to target Asian Americans:[34]

- The Coca-Cola slogan "Coke Adds Life" translated as "Coke brings your ancestors back from the dead" in Japanese.
- Kentucky Fried Chicken described its chicken as "finger-lickin' good" to the Chinese, who don't think it's polite to lick your fingers.
- A footwear ad depicted Japanese women performing foot binding, which only the Chinese did.

Few companies would make those mistakes today. Asian Americans have surpassed Hispanics as the fastest-growing racial group in the nation and have become the largest group of new immigrants to the United States. They boast $718 billion



Family is a very high priority for many Asian Americans.
Source: Monkey Business/Fotolia.

in buying power that is expected to reach $1 trillion in just five years, equal to the 18th-largest economy in the world.

Asian Americans not only make up the fastest-growing population group, they also are the most affluent, best educated, and most likely to hold technology jobs of any ethnic subculture. Their median income is 28 percent higher than the U.S. average and they are almost twice as likely to have graduated from college. In addition they are geographically concentrated; almost 40 percent live in Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco. A growing number belong in a segment Nielsen calls the "swayable shopaholics," who are the most active and impulsive buyers in the country. These consumers prefer well-known brands and lead the nation in their rate of online shopping.

The Asian American subculture can be hard to reach because it's composed of numerous culturally diverse subgroups that use different languages and dialects.[35] The term *Asian* refers to 20 ethnic groups, with Chinese being the largest and Filipino and Japanese second and third, respectively. Filipinos are the only Asians who speak English predominantly among themselves; like Hispanics, most Asians prefer media in their own languages. The languages Asian Americans speak most frequently are Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese.

Despite this diversity, one unifying factor that helps to describe the Asian American subculture is an emphasis on family. A recent survey reported that 54 percent of Asian Americans feel that a successful marriage is one of the most important things in life compared to 34 percent of all Americans. However, "family" also includes grandparents, aunts and uncles, and so on; these consumers are twice as likely to live with other family members as is the average American.[36]

OBJECTIVE 13-3
Marketers increasingly use religious and spiritual themes to talk to consumers.

Religious Subcultures

In recent years we've seen an explosion of religion and spirituality in popular culture, including the box office success of Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion of the Christ*, the book *The Da Vinci Code*, and even the Broadway hit *The*

Book of Mormon.[37] Mainstream marketers that used to avoid religion like the plague (pardon the pun) now actively court church members.

You don't have to be active in an organized religion to "worship" products. A study of a brand community centered on the Apple Newton illustrates how religious themes spill over into everyday consumption, particularly in the case of "cult products." Apple abandoned the Newton PDA years ago, but many avid users still keep the faith. The researchers examined postings in chat rooms devoted to the product. They found that many of the messages have supernatural, religious, and magical themes, including the miraculous performance and survival of the brand, as well as the return of the brand creator. The most common postings concerned instances in which dead Newton batteries magically come back to life. Here is an excerpt from one story, posted on a listserv under the heading "Another Battery Miracle":

> The battery that came with the 2100 that I just received seemed dead I figured that the battery was fried and I have nothing to lose. While "charging," I unplugged the adapter until the indicator said it was running on batteries again, and then plugged it back in until it said "charging" . . . after a few times, the battery charge indicator started moving from the left to right and was full within 10 minutes! . . . I've been using the Newt for about 4 hours straight without



Movies and plays like *The Book of Mormon* accelerate the intersection between religion and popular culture. *Source:* Randy Duchaine/Alamy Stock Photo.

any problems. Strange. It looks like there has been yet another Newton battery miracle! Keep the faith.[38]

In addition to organized religion, numerous other types of groups serve similar functions for consumers—and indeed, they may be loosely based on religious principles (like the highly successful 12-step program that guides Alcoholics Anonymous and other addiction support groups). Weight Watchers, the world's largest support group for weight loss, similarly follows a **spiritual-therapeutic model** even though it is a profitable business.[39]

Organized Religion and Consumption

Marketers have not studied organized religion extensively, possibly because many view it as a taboo subject.[40] As one research director noted, "Religion, along with sex and politics, is one of the three taboo topics that we're never supposed to talk about."[41] Religious sensibilities vary around the world, and big trouble can result if marketers violate taboo subjects in other cultures. Here are some examples:[42]

- Winning entries in the Doritos/Pepsi MAX "Crash the Super Bowl" challenge get broadcast as ads during the Super Bowl. One entry caused a lot of controversy: "Feed the Flock" showed a "pastor" succeeding in bringing in new church parishioners by serving Doritos and Pepsi MAX from the altar—a scenario that some Catholics interpreted as mocking the religion's sacrament of Holy Eucharist (formerly Holy Communion). A petition appeal went out to Catholic organizations urging PepsiCo not to approve the entry, which was described as a "horrific blasphemy." The entry wasn't chosen as a finalist and PepsiCo removed it from the gallery of thousands of entries that were posted on the contest's website. However, the creators of the video posted it on YouTube, where it generated well more than 100,000 views.
- In Salt Lake City, a proposed billboard for Polygamy Porter beer aroused the ire of Mormons worldwide. The billboard company under contract with the brewery refused to erect the ad. The board, which was going to show a picture of a scantily clad man, cherubs, and a six-pack of spouses, advises drinkers to "take some home for the wives."
- An ad for Levi's jeans produced in London shows a young man who buys condoms from a pharmacist and then hides them in the small side pocket of his jeans. When he goes to pick up his date, he discovers that her father is the same pharmacist. The commercial was a hit in the United Kingdom, but people in strongly Catholic Italy and Spain didn't appreciate it at all.
- The Urban Outfitters chain was called out recently for selling a shirt that features a pink triangle against gray and white stripes. The design is similar to the uniforms that gay male prisoners were forced to wear in Nazi concentration camps. A few years previously the stores caught flack when they sold a shirt by the same designer that sported what resembled a Star of David emblem on the pocket like the ones Jews were forced to wear in Nazi Europe to identify themselves.[43]

Despite the occasional blunder, it's clear that religious dietary or dress requirements do create demand for certain products. For example, less than a third of the 6 million consumers who buy the 86,000 kosher products now on the market are Jewish. Seventh-Day Adventists and Muslims have similar dietary requirements,

and other people simply believe that kosher food is of higher quality. Indeed only 15 percent of people who buy kosher do it for religious reasons. That's why some of the nation's largest manufacturers, like Pepperidge Farm, offer a wide range of kosher options.[44]

Born Again Consumers

Mainstream churches are marketing themselves aggressively these days. In the United States, there are approximately 1600 and each serves 2,000 or more congregants per week (some actually attract more than 20,000 to Sunday services!).[45] As a church marketing consultant observes, "Baby boomers think of churches like they think of supermarkets. They want options, choices, and convenience. Imagine if Safeway was open only one hour a week, had only one product, and didn't explain it in English."[46] Clearly, religion is big business.

In the United States, we trace most religious marketing activity to "born again" Christians, who follow literal interpretations of the Bible and acknowledge being born again through belief in Jesus. Theirs is among the fastest-growing religious

Megachurches are spiritual homes to thousands of members.
Source: Frank E. Lockwood/MCT/Newscom.



affiliations in the United States. One research company reported that about 72 million of the 235 million Christians in the United States say they are born again.[47]

The strength of the evangelical movement has caught the attention of many marketers who want to reach these consumers; marketers involved in faith-based marketing strategies include Pfizer, Merck, Tyson, Smucker's, several major automakers, and even the Curves fitness chain. Suzuki sponsored the Christian rock band Kutless on its national tour to promote its motorcycle and SUV lines.[48]

Islamic Marketing

Muslims will be more than one-quarter of the Earth's population by 2030, and during that time period analysts expect the number of U.S. Muslims to more than double. If immigration patterns and Muslims' comparatively higher birth rates continue, experts predict that their numbers in the United States will climb from 2.6 million people to 6.2 million. In several European countries, it's predicted that Muslim populations will exceed 10 percent of the country's total population.[49] That's a consumer market to take seriously. The Whole Foods grocery store chain recently became the first major supermarket to run a Ramadan marketing campaign that caters to Muslims who eat lavish meals during the month when they fast each day.[50]

Nike committed a legendary error when it released a pair of athletic shoes in 1996 with a logo on the sole that some Muslims believed resembled the Arabic lettering for Allah. Muslims consider the feet unclean, and the company had to recall 800,000 pairs of the shoes globally. Today, some companies listen more closely to the needs of this religious subculture. For example, a Malaysian commercial for Sunsilk's Lively Clean & Fresh shampoo depicts a young, smiling woman, but there is not a strand of hair in sight. Her head is completely covered by a *tudung*, the headscarf worn by many Muslim women in that country. Sunsilk's pitch is that it helps remove excess oil from the scalp and hair, a common problem among wearers of *tudungs*.

Mindful of the success of kosher certification, some Muslims recognize that **halal** foods (permissible under the laws of Islam) also may appeal to mainstream consumers. The Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America certifies halal products with a "crescent M," much like the circled "O" of the Orthodox Union, the largest kosher certifier. Both kosher and halal followers forbid pork, and both require similar rituals for butchering meat. Religious Jews don't mix milk and meat, nor do they eat shellfish, whereas religious Muslims don't drink alcohol. Neither group eats birds of prey or blood.[51]

Halal as a descriptor is being used for more and more commodities, services, and activities, including milk, water, nonprescription medicine, holidays, washing powder, tissues, cosmetics, websites, and music. Many major companies are taking steps to reassure consumers that all of their products—not just food—are halal by having them officially certified.

- Colgate-Palmolive claims to be the first international company to have obtained halal certification in Malaysia for toothpaste and mouthwash products. Some mouthwashes may contain alcohol, which would be forbidden under halal guidelines. Colgate's products now bear the halal logo, which also is featured in the company's television commercials.
- Nokia introduced a phone for the Middle East and North Africa markets that came loaded with an Islamic Organizer including alarms for the five daily



The Muslim subculture represents an attractive market for many retailers.
Source: Iain Masterton/Alamy Stock Photo.

prayers, two Islamic e-books, and an e-card application that lets people send SMS greeting cards for Ramadan.

- Ogilvy & Mather established a new arm, Ogilvy Noor (Noor means "light" in Arabic), which the ad agency describes as "the world's first bespoke Islamic branding practice." Ogilvy also introduced the Noor index, which rates the appeal of brands to Muslim consumers. The index was formulated on the basis of how consumers ranked more than 30 well-known brands for compliance with *Shariah*, or Islamic law. Lipton tea, owned by Unilever, topped the list, followed by Nestlé. Ogilvy's research shows that young Muslim consumers are different from their Western counterparts; they believe that by staying true to the core values of their religion, they are more likely to achieve success in the modern world.[52]

OBJECTIVE 13-4
Our traditional notions about families are outdated.

The Family Unit and Age Subcultures

We've seen that subcultural identities revolve around shared experiences and perspectives. That's why it's so important for marketers to think about both when consumers are born and the family structure into which they're born. Age groups and the family unit help to shape people's experiences, needs, and preferences. In this section we'll take a quick look at the family unit and then dive into age subcultures to understand how these identities influence consumer behavior.

Family Structure

Family size depends on such factors as educational level, the availability of birth control, and religion. Demographers define the **fertility rate** as the number of births per year per 1,000 women of childbearing age. Marketers keep a close eye on the

population's birth rate to gauge how the pattern of births will affect demand for products in the future.

Worldwide, surveys show that many women want smaller families today. Ironically, while populations boom in some underdeveloped parts of the world, industrialized countries face future crises because there will be relatively fewer young people to support their elders. For population levels to remain constant, the fertility rate has to be 2.0 so that the two children can replace their parents. That's not happening in places such as Spain, Sweden, Germany, and Greece, where the fertility rate is 1.4 or lower. As a benchmark, the U.S. rate has dropped as well but is still at 1.84 births per woman on average.[53] The median age at which American women first give birth has risen to 26 as they wait until they're older and more established to start families. Indeed, women are significantly less likely than they were two decades ago to give birth as teenagers or in their early 20s, and more likely to do so in their 40s.[54]

The **extended family** used to be the most common family unit. It consists of three generations who live together, and it often includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Like the Cleavers of *Leave It to Beaver* and other TV families of the 1950s, the **nuclear family**—a mother, a father, and one or more children (perhaps with a sheepdog thrown in for good measure)—largely replaced the extended family, at least in U.S. society.

However, we've witnessed many changes since the days of Beaver Cleaver. Although many people continue to base their image of the typical family on old TV shows, demographic data tell us that this "ideal" image of the family is no longer realistic. The U.S. Census Bureau regards any occupied housing unit as a **household** regardless of the relationships among the people who live there. Thus, one person living alone, three roommates, or two lovers (whether straight or gay) constitute a household.

The family unit continues to evolve and marketers need to challenge their cherished assumptions:[55]

- Nearly half of all women between the ages of 25 and 29 have never been married, up from about a quarter of that age group in 1986. In 1950, the median age of first marriages was 23 for men and 20 for women. One reason for this drop is that it's really expensive to raise a kid today (as if you didn't know that): The government estimates that it will cost the average middle-class couple $241,080 to raise a child to age 18. Of course, that doesn't even count college costs. The percentage of women of childbearing age who define themselves as **voluntarily childless** is on the rise. Twenty percent of women ages 40 to 44 have no children, double the level of 30 years ago. Childless couples are an attractive market segment for some companies (but obviously not for others, such as Gerber Baby Food). So-called **DINKs** (double income, no kids) couples are better educated on average than are two-income couples with children. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 30 percent of childless couples consist of two college graduates, compared with 17 percent of those with kids. Many childless couples feel snubbed by a child-oriented society. In recent years they formed networking organizations such as Childfree by Choice to support this lifestyle decision.
- The likelihood of a woman following the traditional path of marriage and then a baby carriage is strongly influenced by social class (see Chapter 12). Whereas 90 percent of U.S. women who have a college degree or higher get married first, 57 percent of women with high school diplomas or less are unmarried when they give birth to their first child. More than one-quarter of these unwed mothers live with a partner who is not necessarily their child's biological father. The number

of couples who **cohabitate** (live together without being married) jumped from 2.9 million in 1996 to 7.8 million in 2012.

- Circumstances such as divorce, the need for a breadwinner to live in a different place, and military service make it more common for family networks to be scattered geographically so parents, children, and extended family members need to work harder (and rely more on digital platforms like Skype) to maintain their connections with one another.
- Children are more likely to live at home after graduating from college rather than taking their own places. Demographers call these returnees **boomerang kids** (you throw them out . . . they keep coming back). In today's shrinking job market, many young people are forced to redefine the assumption that college graduation automatically means living on their own. About 40 percent of adults between 25 and 29 are now living, or have lived recently, with their parents.
- Many adults care for their own parents as well as for their children. In fact, Americans on average spend 17 years caring for children, but 18 years assisting aged parents.[56] Some label middle-aged people the **Sandwich Generation** because they must support both the generation above them and the one below them. As family living arrangements change, homebuilders need to come up with new footprints that can accommodate boomerang children, aging parents, and single people. Lennar, one of the largest homebuilders in the country, calls its solution "Next Gen—The Home Within a Home." This layout offers a 3000 square foot house, but it also includes a separate one-bedroom apartment with its own entrance and garage.[57]

Because they recognize that family needs and expenditures change over time, marketers apply the **family life cycle (FLC)** concept to segment households. The FLC combines trends in income and family composition with the changes these demands place on this income. As we age, our preferences and needs for products and activities tend to change. Twenty-somethings spend less than average on most products and services because their households are small and their incomes are low. Income levels tend to rise (at least until retirement), so that people can afford more over time. Older consumers spend more per capita on luxury items such as gourmet foods and upscale home furnishings. In addition, we don't need to repeat many purchases we make when we start out. For example, we tend to accumulate durable goods such as large appliances and replace them only as necessary.

A life-cycle approach to the study of the family assumes that pivotal events alter role relationships and trigger new stages of life that alter our priorities and brand loyalties.[58] In addition to the birth of a first child, other pivotal events include the departure of the last child from the house, the death of a spouse, retirement of the principal wage earner, and divorce. At websites like The Bump, women find tools such as an Ovulation Calculator and lists of baby names; The Knot offers a range of wedding-related services when those babies grow up and get hitched.

As people move through these life stages, we observe significant changes in expenditures in leisure, food, durables, and services, even after we adjust the figures to reflect changes in income.[59] We simply attribute some of these changes to variations in functional needs, whereas others reflect deeper motivations as we transition from one role to another. For example, researchers find that new mothers undergo profound changes in self-concept during pregnancy and after delivery; these changes influence the types of products they consume to reflect their new identities.[60]

Over the years, researchers have proposed several models to describe family life-cycle stages, but with limited effect because most failed to take into account such important social trends as the changing role of women, the acceleration of alternative lifestyles, childless and delayed-child marriages, and single-parent households. We need to focus on four variables to adequately describe these changes:

1. Age
2. Marital status
3. The presence or absence of children in the home, and
4. The ages of children, if present.

Today, we have to relax our definition of marital status to include *any* couple living together in a long-term relationship. Thus, although we might not consider roommates "married," for marketing purposes a man and woman who have established a household would be, as would two homosexual men or lesbian women who have a similar understanding. When we update our outlook, we identify a set of categories that includes many more types of family situations.[61] Consumers we classify into these categories show marked differences in consumption patterns:

- Young bachelors and newlyweds are the most likely to exercise; go out to bars, concerts, movies, and restaurants; and drink alcohol. Although people in their twenties account for less than 4 percent of all household spending in the United States, their expenditures are well above average in such categories as apparel, electronics, and gasoline.[62]
- Families with young children are more likely to consume health foods such as fruit, juice, and yogurt; those made up of single parents and older children buy more junk foods. The dollar value of homes, cars, and other durables is lowest for bachelors and single parents but increases as people go through the full-nest and childless-couple stages.
- Partly because they score wedding gifts, newlyweds are the most likely to own appliances such as toaster ovens and electric coffee grinders. Babysitter and day-care usage is, of course, highest among single-parent and full-nest households, whereas older couples and bachelors are most likely to employ home maintenance services (e.g., lawn mowing).

Age Cohort

The era in which you grow up bonds you with the millions of others who come of age during the same time period. Obviously, your needs and preferences change as you grow older—often in concert with others of your own age (even though some of us don't really believe we'll ever get older). For this reason, our age is a big part of our identity. All things equal, we are more likely to have things in common with others of our own age than with those younger or older.

An **age cohort** consists of people of similar ages who have similar experiences. They share many common memories about cultural icons (e.g., John Wayne versus Kanye West), important historical events (e.g., the Great Depression versus the Great Recession), and so on. Although there is no universally accepted way to sort people into age cohorts, each of us seems to have a pretty good idea what we mean when we refer to "my generation." Marketers often target products and services to a specific age cohort; our possessions help us identify with others of a certain age and express the priorities and needs we encounter at each life stage.[66]

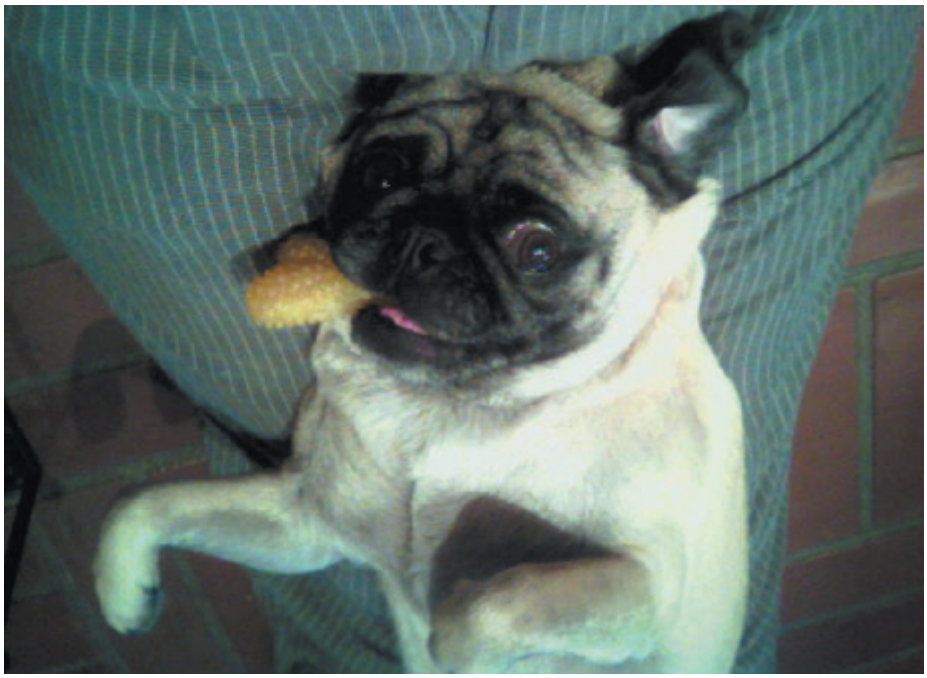
Marketing Opportunity

Almost one-third of all U.S. households have at least one pet, and 92 percent of pet owners consider their furry friends members of the family—83 percent call themselves "Mommy" or "Daddy" when they talk to their pets.[63] Many of us assume that pets share our emotions; perhaps that helps to explain why more than three-quarters of domestic cats and dogs receive presents on holidays and birthdays.[64] The pet industry pulls in more revenue (almost $40 billion annually) than either the toy or candy industries. Here are a few examples of pet-smart marketing:[65]

- Kennels look a lot more like spas for the furry. At some of them, dogs can hike, swim, listen to music, watch TV, and even get a pedicure—complete with nail polish. Heated tile floors and high-tech ventilation systems are common. When a dog stays in the "ambassador suite" at Club Bow-Wow, a staff member sleeps overnight in the room. PetSmart, the largest U.S. pet-store chain, opened a chain of PetsHotels, where furry guests lounge on hypoallergenic lambskin blankets and snack on lactose-free, fat-free ice cream. The suites feature raised dog beds and a television that plays videos, such as *Lady and the Tramp* and *101 Dalmatians*.
- Companies that make human products, such as Gucci, Juicy Couture, Harley-Davidson, IKEA, Lands' End, Paul Mitchell, and Ralph Lauren, also sell products for pets, ranging from shampoos to nail polish to gold-plated bowls. Harley-Davidson started its pet collection after it noticed that customers at rallies and other events bring along their dogs; some ride shotgun in the motorcycles' saddle bags or side cars. Customers can buy denim and leather jackets for their pets, as well as riding goggles, bandanas, spiked leather collars, and even squeaky toys shaped like oil cans.

(continued)

The author's pug, Kelbie Rae.
Source: Photo courtesy of Michael Solomon.



Marketing Opportunity

- Designer water for dogs? A California company started things off when it introduced a vitamin-enriched water product for dogs. A Florida company sells "DogWater" in containers that double as throwing toys. Then there's K9 Water Inc., a company whose catalog lists products such as "Gutter Water" and chicken-flavored "Toilet Water." Make that a double.
- What happens when our four-legged companion goes to the great kennel in the sky? One trend is to freeze-dry the departed pet rather than bury it or cremate it. The bereaved say that turning furry friends into perma-pets helps them deal with loss and maintains a connection to their former companions. Once dried, the animal's body doesn't decay, so it can continue to occupy that special place on the couch.

Although there is general consensus when analysts describe age cohorts, the labels and cutoff dates they use to put consumers into generational categories are subjective. One rough approximation looks like this:[67]

- **The Interbellum Generation**—People born at the beginning of the 20th century.
- **The Silent Generation**—People born between the two world wars.
- **The War Baby Generation**—People born during World War II.
- **The Baby Boom Generation**—People born between 1946 and 1964.
- **Generation X**—People born between 1965 and 1985.
- **Generation Y**—People born between 1986 and 2002.
- **Generation Z**—People born 2003 and later.

Children: Consumers-in-Training

Disney estimates the North American baby market, including staples like formula, to be worth $36.3 billion annually. A representative of the Disney Baby program that operates in 580 maternity hospitals in the United States visits a new mother and offers a free Disney Cuddly Bodysuit, a variation of the classic Onesie. The rep provides bedside demonstrations and asks mothers to sign up for email alerts from DisneyBaby.com. As one company executive observes, "To get that mom thinking about her family's first park experience before her baby is even born is a home run."[68]

In Chapter 4 we discussed how people learn to be consumers. As you well know, this process starts when we are young. Parents often reward their kids with products and punish them by taking things away. This form of **material parenting** shapes children's behavior. A recent study found that kids whose parents use products to shape behavior are more likely to be materialistic as adults.[69]

It's a no-brainer that kids represent a huge market for toys, apparel, and even electronics; already more than half of kids aged 8 to 12 have their own cellphone and there are numerous tablets designed for them as well.[70] However, children also play a big role in many other household purchases. **Parental yielding** occurs when a parental decision maker "surrenders" to a child's request.[71] Yielding drives many product selections because about 90 percent of these requests are for a specific brand. Researchers estimate that children directly influence about $453 billion worth of family purchases in a year. They report that on average children weigh in with a purchase request every 2 minutes when they shop with parents.[72] In recognition of this influence, Mrs. Butterworth's Syrup created a $6 million campaign to target kids directly with humorous ads that show the lengths to which adults will go to get the syrup bottle to talk to them. An executive who worked on the campaign explained, "We needed to create the *nag factor* [where kids demand that their parents buy the product]."[73]

Gen Y and Gen Z

In 1956, the label *teenager* entered the general U.S. vocabulary when Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers became the first pop group to identify themselves with this new subculture. Believe it or not, the concept of a teenager is a fairly new idea. Throughout most of history a person simply made the transition from child to adult. It was common for kids in their late teens to be married and start their own families (of course, life expectancies were much shorter as well).

The magazine *Seventeen* was first published in 1944; its founders realized that modern young women didn't want to be little clones of Mom. Following World War II, the teenage conflict between rebellion and conformity began to unfold as teen culture pitted Elvis Presley, with his slicked hair and suggestive pelvis swivels, against the wholesome Pat Boone, with his white bucks and whiter teeth. Today, this rebellion continues to play out as pubescent consumers forsake their Barbies for the likes of Paris Hilton, Lindsay Lohan (when they're not in jail or rehab), Justin Bieber, or the teen heartthrob *du jour*.[75]

The global youth market is massive. It represents about $100 billion in spending power! Much of this money goes toward "feel-good" products: cosmetics, posters, and fast food—with the occasional nose ring thrown in. Because teens are interested in so many different products and have the resources to obtain them, many marketers avidly court them.

As anyone who has been there knows, puberty and adolescence are both the best of times and the worst of times. Many exciting changes happen as we leave the role of child and prepare to assume the role of adult. These transitions create a lot of uncertainty about the self, and the need to belong and to find your unique identity as a person becomes pressing. At this age, the choices of activities, friends, and clothes are crucial. Teens constantly search for cues for the "right" way to look and behave from their peers and from advertising. Advertising to teens is typically action-oriented and depicts a group of "in" teens who use the product.

Consumers in this age subculture have a number of needs (including some that conflict with one another) such as experimentation, belonging, independence, responsibility, and approval from others. Product usage is a significant medium that lets them satisfy these needs. For example, many kids view smoking cigarettes as a status activity because of the numerous movies they've seen that glorify this practice. In one study, ninth graders watched original

The Tangled Web

The Internet of Things gives parents a whole new set of options to entertain and monitor their kids. But, devices that interact with babies, kids, or adolescents in real time also raise red flags. In 2018 Mattel had to cancel plans to sell an artificial intelligence device called Aristotle after lawmakers and parents raised concerns about privacy and children's development. According to the company, the product used Amazon's Alexa technology to soothe a crying baby, teach ABC's, reinforce good manners, play interactive games, automatically reorder baby products, and help kids with homework. Some groups argued that kids shouldn't be encouraged to form bonds with data-collecting devices.[74]

movie footage with either smoking scenes or control footage with the smoking edited out. Sure enough, when the young viewers saw the actors smoking, this enhanced their perceptions of smokers' social stature and increased their own intent to smoke. (The good news: When kids see an antismoking advertisement before the film, these effects cancel out.)[76] Today, controversy swirls around the huge popularity of vaping and especially of JUULing among minors as Gen Z replaces traditional "death sticks" with electronic alternatives.

Teenagers in every culture grapple with fundamental developmental issues when they transition from childhood to adult. Throughout history young people have coped with insecurity, parental authority, and peer pressure (although each generation has trouble believing it's not the first!). According to Teenage Research Unlimited, the five most important social issues for teens are AIDS, race relations, child abuse, abortion, and the environment. Today's teens often have to cope with additional family responsibilities as well, especially if they live in nontraditional families where they have significant responsibility for shopping, cooking, and housework. It's hard work being a teen in the modern world. The Saatchi & Saatchi advertising agency identified four basic conflicts common to all teens:

- **Autonomy versus belonging**—Teens need to acquire independence, so they try to break away from their families. However, they need to attach themselves to a support structure, such as peers, to avoid being alone.
- **Rebellion versus conformity**—Teens need to rebel against social standards of appearance and behavior, yet they still need to fit in and be accepted by others. They prize "in-your-face" products that cultivate a rebellious image.
- **Idealism versus pragmatism**—Teens tend to view adults as hypocrites, whereas they see themselves as being sincere. They have to struggle to reconcile their view of how the world should be with the realities they perceive around them.
- **Narcissism versus intimacy**—Teens tend to obsess about their appearance and needs. However, they also feel the desire to connect with others on a meaningful level.[77]

These needs often collide, sometimes in unpleasant ways (there's nothing more venomous than a teenager who's having a bad hair day!). One researcher explored the role of *ridicule* as a mechanism through which adolescents exchange information about consumption norms and values. He found that—often beginning in middle school—adolescents use ridicule to ostracize, haze, or admonish peers who violate consumption norms. One result of this painful process is that kids internalize their peers' stereotypes about aspirational and avoidance groups (remember Chapter 11) and often significantly alter their consumption patterns to try to align themselves with the former and distance themselves from the latter. For example, one of the kids in the study quickly exchanged a pair of white sneakers for more stylish black ones after his peers ridiculed him.[78]

Gen Z

Gen Z describes kids who were born in the late 1990s to early 2000s, so the oldest are just entering college. This is the first generation of the 21st century and it's the most diverse we've ever experienced: 55 percent are Caucasian, 24 percent are Hispanic, 14 percent are African American, and 4 percent are Asian. Many have friends from other racial and ethnic subcultures and they assume this to be the norm. They are accustomed to blurred gender roles, where household

responsibilities don't split along traditional lines. And, of course they are "Digital Natives" who spend a big chunk of their time online, so they expect brands to engage them in two-way digital conversations.

Marketers are just starting to figure out what this new group of young consumers will look like. Having grown up during the Great Recession, they are not as likely to believe in an idealized, carefree world. They tend to be independent and gravitate to stores like Free People rather than Abercrombie & Fitch.[80] They learn about new styles from around the globe via social media, so they are equally at home watching *The Hunger Games* or listening to Korean K-pop. Their idols are "self-made" internet stars like the Swedish video producer PewDiePie, who has the world's most subscribed YouTube channel, and the teenage video sensation Evan who has 25 million followers. They follow influencers on Instagram and YouTube like Gigi and Bella Hadid, Kendall and Kylie Jenner, Zendaya, Baby Ariel, and King Bach. They love "live chilling" on group video apps like Housepaty, Fam, Tribe, Airtime and ooVoo. Their favorite brands include Victoria's Secret/PINK, American Eagle, and Adidas. They love to upload their own content on apps such as musical.ly (now uploaded by more than 90 million people worldwide) that allows you to make short 15-second videos of yourself lip-syncing to popular music and audio bites. Like Millennials, they want to buy brands that stand for something—and importantly, that they view authentic. And not surprisingly they have their own slang terms such as "can't even," "fire," "salty," and "HMU" (hit me up).[81]

Gen Y

A brand overhaul by Pepsi that included its new smiley-face logo had the so-called **Gen Y** age segment squarely in its sights. Young people have always been Pepsi's lifeblood, starting with its tagline "You're in the Pepsi Generation" that over time evolved into "Generation Next" and "The Choice of a New Generation." But that blood has drained or thinned a bit over the past few years, as young people gravitate toward energy drinks and fortified waters. The company's research showed that this age group—which also goes by the labels **Millennials** and **Echo Boomers**—is hopeful about the future; almost all of them agree that it's important to maintain a positive outlook on life. Pepsi also found that 95 percent of Millennials have positive associations with the word *change* and that they link the word to others like *new, progress, hope*, and *excitement*.[82]

Gen Yers were born between 1986 and 2002. They already make up nearly one-third of the U.S. population, and they spend $170 billion a year of their own and their parents' money. They are "jugglers" who value being both footloose and connected to their "peeps" 24/7. The advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi labels this new kind of lifestyle **connexity**. To help Millennials feel connected with one another, companies including Apple and Philips developed miniature devices such as the iPod and MP3 key ring that store music and images for kids on the run—and they plug directly into a USB port for up- and downloading. When Toyota developed its youth-oriented Scion model, researchers learned that Echo Boomers practically live in their cars; for example, one-quarter of Gen Yers keep a full change of clothes in their vehicles. So Toyota's designers made the Scion resemble a home on wheels, with fully reclining front seats so drivers can nap between classes and a 15-volt outlet so they can plug in their computers.[83]

Gen Yers love brands like Sony, Patagonia, Gap, Aveda, and Apple. However, a lot of marketers have run into trouble as they try to keep up with changes in their tastes. This can be difficult because these consumers like to "trade up and down,"

Marketing Pitfall

Marketers refer to kids aged 8 to 14 as tweens because they are "between" childhood and adolescence, and they exhibit characteristics of both age groups. Many marketers want to appeal to these consumers; they spend about $43 billion annually! Tweens are keen to experiment with products that make them appear older, even though they may not be psychologically or physically ready. Abercrombie & Fitch crossed the line way back in 2002, when the clothing chain had to pull a line of thong underwear for young girls after many adults protested. Since that time, however, the line between childhood and adolescence continues to blur. In 2005 the NPD Group reported that the average age at which women began to use beauty products was 17. By 2009, that average had dropped to 13. Another study by Experian found that 43 percent of 6- to 9-year olds use lipstick or lip gloss, and 38 percent use hairstyling products. In addition to adult shows like *Extreme Makeover*, tweens watch TV shows like MTV's *16 and Pregnant* and movies like *Little Miss Perfect*, which tells the story of a high school freshman who encounters an online pro-eating disorder subculture (the movie's tagline: "Thinner is the winner").[79]

that is, they fluctuate between upscale brands and less expensive ones. That helps to explain why both Louis Vuitton and Target both make the list of their most favorite brands.[84] Another issue is that apparel no longer is as important to this age group; youth-oriented chains like Wet Seal and Hot Topic have gone bankrupt because tech has replaced clothing as the hot status item. As a magazine editor observed, "You try to get them talking about what's the next look, what they're excited about purchasing in apparel, and the conversation always circles back to the iPhone 6. [This quote dates from that version of the iPhone.] Having a cool phone to show you're plugged in is a huge part of people's style, a huge part of life these days."[85]

A research firm analyzed data from several million Millennials and concluded that three major forces have shaped their experience:

1. **Economy:** The company identified a subgroup of ambitious go-getters. Women in particular seem very aware of their "self-brand" and work hard to project a professional image via clothing and home décor. Men tend to identify with a "frat boy" culture and spend a lot of time and money on technology, gaming, and sports. However, these Millennials are a minority. Many are stuck in "economic purgatory"; they are overeducated but underemployed and focus on economizing by living with roommates and clipping coupons. Even this more frugal group, however, considers technology like smartphones a must-have.
2. **Globalization:** Millennials are eager to experience other cultures, but they do this in different ways. Ironically, those who are underemployed and thus less invested in their current jobs are more likely to travel to foreign countries. Many of those who are actually on a desired career path settle for being "foodies" who like to patronize restaurants that serve exotic cuisine so they can vicariously collect these experiences.
3. **Social media:** Gen Y is constantly open to public observation because every new post or status update reveals something about themselves. Some are what the report terms "Exuberants" who are avid posters and constantly blog about their experiences. However, most are "Collectors" who passively absorb others' experiences. A smaller number, such as YouTube star Bethany Mota, are digital gatekeepers who curate or edit style options from the huge number of options and then advise their followers what to buy.[86]

Unlike their parents or older siblings, Gen Yers tend to hold relatively traditional values and they prefer to fit in rather than rebel. Their acculturation agents (like those we discussed previously in this chapter) stress teamwork—team teaching, team grading, collaborative sports, community service, service learning, and student juries. Violent crime among teenagers is down 60 to 70 percent. The use of tobacco and alcohol is at an all-time low, as is teen pregnancy. Five out of 10 Echo Boomers say they trust the government, and virtually all of them trust Mom and Dad.[87]

We've already discussed the overwhelming importance of the online world in the lives of consumers, especially young ones. Millennials are the first generation to grow up with computers at home in a 500-channel TV universe. They are *multitaskers* who easily engage their cell phones, music downloads, and IMs at the same time. They are totally at home in a *thumb culture* that communicates online and by cell phone (more likely via text and IM than by voice).

Within the Gen Y subculture, college students are a special segment. There are more than 21 million students in the United States today, and they spend $163 billion per year on discretionary purchases. Of this amount, about $50 billion goes to food purchases, $31 billion to automotive expenses, and greater than $18 billion to clothing and shoes. No surprise: college students love gadgets. They own an average of 6.8 devices, including laptops, smartphones, and video game consoles. Although they spend much of their time on social media, about one-third say they avoid advertising on these sites. They would rather connect with brands by receiving product samples and attending sponsored events.[88]

Gen X

The **Gen X** age subculture consists of 46 million Americans who were born between 1965 and 1985. This group got the label following publication of the best-selling novel *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture* by Douglas Coupland. Some called them "slackers" or "baby busters" because of their supposed alienation and laziness, and these stereotypes live on in movies such as *Clueless* and in music groups such as Marilyn Manson.[89]

Advertisers fell all over themselves to create messages that would not turn off the worldly Generation X cohort. Many of them referenced old TV shows such as *Gilligan's Island* or showed commercials that featured disheveled actors in turned-around baseball caps who tried their best to appear blasé. This approach actually turned off a lot of Busters because it implied that they had nothing else to do but sit around and watch old television reruns. Subaru sponsored one of the first commercials of this genre. It showed a sloppily dressed young man who described the Impreza model as "like punk rock" as he denounced the competition as "boring and corporate." The commercial did not play well with its intended audience, and Subaru eventually switched advertising agencies.

Today, Gen Xers have grown up, and in fact members of this generation are responsible for many culture-changing products and companies such as Google, YouTube, and Amazon. A book that laments the bad rap Gen X has gotten sums it up: *X Saves the World: How Generation X Got the Shaft But Can Still Keep Everything from Sucking.*[90]

The Mature Market

Restylane is the top-selling dermal injection to reduce the appearance of wrinkles. The company decided to pitch it directly to consumers for the first time, so in keeping with new media trends it launched a multipronged campaign that recognizes the technical prowess of many middle-aged people. A conventional TV spot features before-and-after results along with women who talk about how frequently men check them out after the treatment. But a second component is a video skit on YouTube that supposedly takes place during a woman's 50th birthday party. While her son works on a video birthday card, Mom gets caught smooching with a younger man on a couch. Viewers don't know the skit is an ad until the last 15 seconds. A third prong is a contest to name the "Hottest Mom in America": Contestants submit videos to a website and the winner gets cash, free treatments for a year, and an interview with a modeling agency.[91] Today's Mom isn't exactly June Cleaver, the ideal mother depicted in the old TV show *Leave it to Beaver*. Let's take a closer look at the changing face of mature consumers—some of them aren't as mature as they used to be.

Baby Boomers

The **Baby Boomer** age subculture consists of people whose parents established families following the end of World War II and during the 1950s when the peacetime economy was strong and stable. As a general rule, when people feel confident about how things are going in the world, they are more likely to decide to have children, so this was a "boom" time for delivery rooms. As teenagers in the 1960s and 1970s, the "Woodstock generation" created a revolution in style, politics, and consumer attitudes. As they aged, they fueled cultural events as diverse as the Free Speech movement and hippies in the 1960s to Reaganomics and yuppies in the 1980s. Now that they are older, they continue to influence popular culture.

This generation is much more active and physically fit than its predecessors; Baby Boomers are 6 percent more likely than the national average to engage in some kind of sports activity.[92] In addition. Baby Boomers are now in their peak earning years and starting to retire. As one commercial for VH1, the music video network that caters to those who are a bit too old for MTV, pointed out, "The generation that dropped acid to escape reality . . . is the generation that drops antacid to cope with it." A study found that the majority of Boomers want to be "surprised and delighted" by brands. Offerings that especially appeal to them include Swiffer for the home; Keurig for the palate; Amy's Kitchen for organic foods, Dove, and Trader Joe's.[93]

Demographers distinguish between two subgroups of Baby Boomers: "Leading-edge" boomers, born between 1946 and 1955, grew up during the Vietnam War and Civil Rights eras. "Trailing-edge" boomers, who were born between 1956 and 1964, came of age after Vietnam and the Watergate scandal. The Great Recession had a greater impact on trailing-edge boomers than leading-edge boomers. The relatively older group is less burdened by expenses like college tuitions and mortgage payments, so they are able to buy more discretionary products and experiences.[94] That helps to explain why cosmetic surgery procedures on Americans over the age of 65 have increased by well over 1000 percent in the last 20 years![95]

To appreciate the impact middle-aged consumers have and will have on our economy, consider this: At current spending levels, a 1 percent increase in the population of householders aged 35 to 54 results in an additional $8.9 billion in consumer spending. Ironically, however, most marketers neglect this incredibly important group: For example, although Boomers spend 38.5 percent of consumer packaged goods (CPG) dollars, Nielsen estimates that only 5 percent of advertising dollars are currently targeted toward adults 35 to 64 years old. Nielsen's research says that Boomers dominate 1,023 out of 1,083 CPG categories, and watch 9.34 hours of video per day—more than any other segment. They also constitute a third of all TV viewers, online users, social media users, and Twitter users and are significantly more likely to have broadband internet. As a Nielsen executive observed, "Marketers have this tendency to think the Baby Boomers—getting closer to retirement—will just be calm and peaceful as they move ahead, and that's not true. Everything we see with our behavioral data says these people are going to be active consumers for much longer. They are going to be in better health, and despite the ugliness around the retirement stuff now, they are still going to be more affluent. They are going to be an important segment for a long time."[96]

Seniors

The old woman sits alone in her dark apartment while the television blares out a soap opera. Once every couple of days, her arthritic hands slowly and painfully open

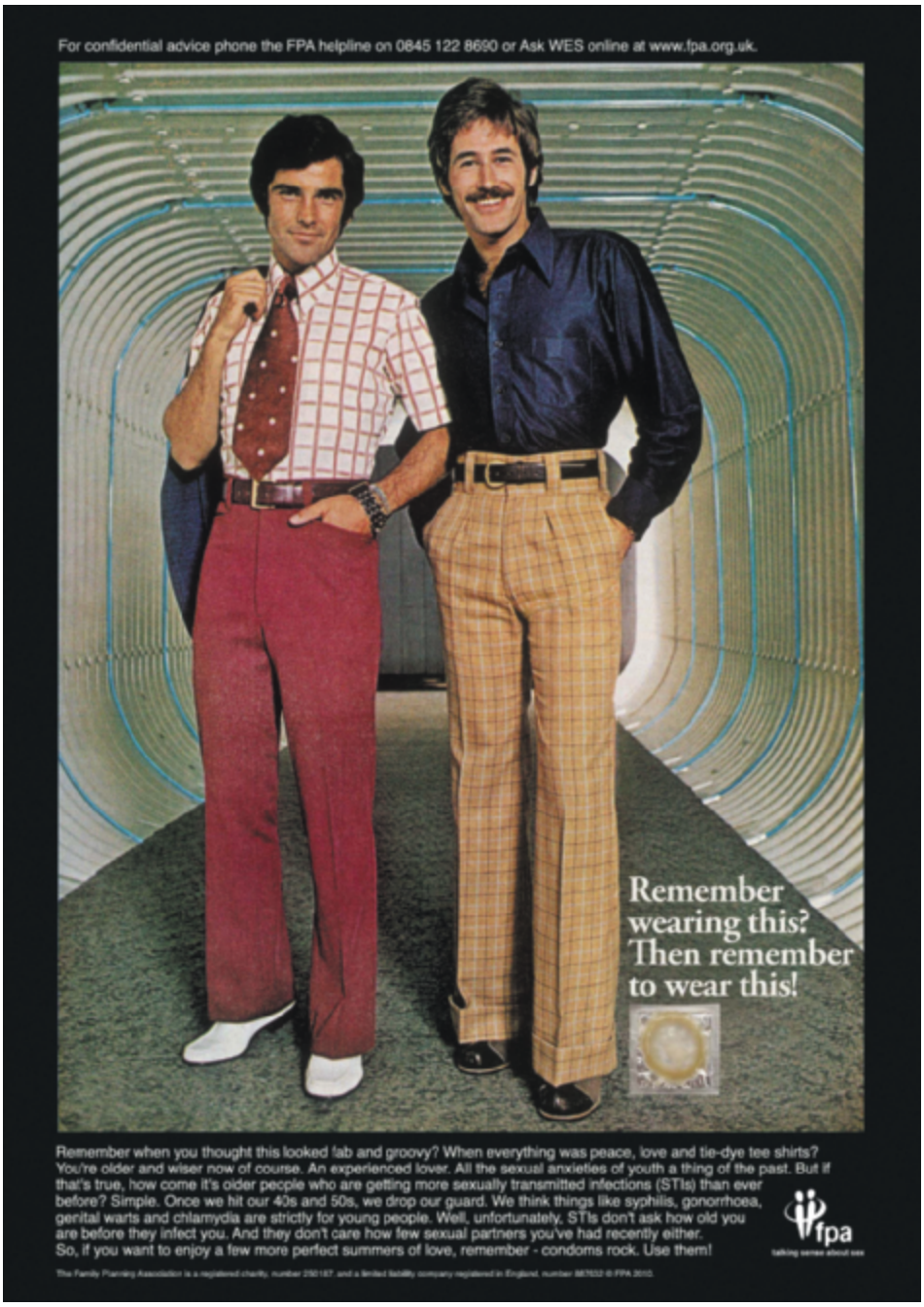


This 1962 Pepsi ad highlights the emphasis on youth power that began to shape our culture as Baby Boomers came of age in the 1960s.

Source: PEPSI-COLA, PEPSI and the Pepsi Globe are registered trademarks of PepsiCo, Inc. Used with permission.

her triple-locked door as she ventures out to the corner store to buy essentials such as tea, milk, and cereal—of course she always picks the least expensive items. Most of the time she sits in her rocking chair and thinks sadly about her dead husband and the good times they used to have together.

Is this the image you have of a typical elderly consumer? Until recently, many marketers did. They neglected the elderly in their feverish pursuit of the youth market. But as our population ages and we live longer and healthier lives, the game is rapidly changing. A lot of businesses are updating their old stereotype of the poor recluse. The newer, more accurate image is of an active person who is interested in what life has to offer, who is an enthusiastic consumer with the means and willingness to buy many goods and services, and who maintains strong loyalty to favorite brands over the years. In the U.K., Coca-Cola's "First Tastes" initiative allows people over 70 to get their first tattoo (temporary or permanent) to show that age is not an obstacle to being adventurous.[97]



This British AIDS awareness message targets men over the age of 50.
Source: www.fpa.org.uk Created by theethicalagency.co.uk.

Think about this: The United Nations says that people older than 60 are the fastest-growing age group on Earth. There are 700 million of them now, and there will be 2 billion by midcentury. In the United States, by 2030, 20 percent of the population will be over the age of 65.[98] By 2100, there will be 5 million of us who are at least 100 years old.[99] Few of us may be around then, but we can already see the effects of the **senior market** today. Older adults control more than 50 percent of discretionary income, and their net worth is five times that of the average citizen.[100] We're living longer and healthier because of more wholesome lifestyles (at least some of us), improved medical diagnoses and treatment, and changing cultural expectations about appropriate behaviors for the elderly.

Larger numbers of older people lead more active, multidimensional lives than we assume. Nearly 60 percent engage in volunteer activities, almost 20 percent aged 65 to 72 still work, and more than 14 million provide care for their grandchildren.[101] It is also crucial to remember that income alone does not express seniors' spending power. Older consumers are finished with many of the financial obligations that siphon off the income of younger consumers. Eighty percent of consumers older than age 65 own their own homes. In addition, child-rearing costs are over. As the popular bumper sticker proudly proclaims, "We're Spending Our Children's Inheritance!" Some of the important areas that stand to benefit from the surging gray market include exercise facilities, cruises and tourism, cosmetic surgery and skin treatments, and "how-to" books and university courses that offer enhanced learning opportunities.

Research confirms the popular wisdom that age is more a state of mind than of body. A person's mental outlook and activity level have a lot more to do with longevity and quality of life than does *chronological age*, the actual number of years the person has actually been alive. That's why **perceived age**, or how old a person *feels*, is a better yardstick to use. Researchers measure perceived age on several dimensions, including "feel-age" (i.e., how old a person feels) and "look-age" (i.e., how old a person looks).[102] The older consumers get, the younger they feel relative to their actual age.

A study investigated what the authors call **consumer identity renaissance**; this refers to the redefinition process people undergo when they retire. The research identified two different types of identity renaissance: revived (revitalization of previous identities) or emergent (pursuit of entirely new life projects). Even though many retirees cope with losses (of professional identity, spouses, and so on), many of them focus on moving forward. They engage in a host of strategies to do this, including affiliation, where they reconnect with family members and friends (in many cases online), and *self-expression.* This latter strategy may involve revisiting an activity they never had time to adequately pursue when they were younger, learning new skills, or perhaps moving into an urban area to reengage with cultural activities.[103]

Place-Based Subcultures

OBJECTIVE 13-5
Birds of a feather flock together in place-based subcultures.

Geodemography refers to analytical techniques that combine data on consumer expenditures and other socioeconomic factors with geographic information about the areas in which people live to identify consumers who share common consumption patterns. Researchers base this approach on the common assumption that "birds of a feather flock together"—people who have similar needs and tastes also tend to live near one another, so it should be possible to locate "pockets" of like-minded people whom marketers can reach more economically by direct mail and other methods. For example, a marketer who wants to reach white, single consumers who are college educated and tend to be fiscally conservative may find that it is more efficient to mail catalogs to zip codes 20770 (Greenbelt, MD) and 90277 (Redondo Beach, CA) than to adjoining areas in either Maryland or California, where there are fewer consumers who exhibit these characteristics.

Anyone who has travelled within the United States recognizes that our country actually divided into several subcultures. There's no mistaking the southern "Bible Belt" for the Northeast or Pacific Northwest. Various analysts have tried to describe these place-based subcultures. One recent attempt designates several distinct "American Nations" that include:[104]

TABLE 13.1 A Comparison of Two Different Youth-Oriented PRIZM Clusters

Segment #4: Young Digerati	Segment #24: Up-and-Comers
Tech-savvy consumers who live in trendy urban neighborhoods filled with fitness clubs, boutiques, and microbreweries.	A transition segment for young, middle-class singles before they marry and establish families. Primarily live in mid-size cities and includes many recent college graduates who are into athletic activities, technology, and nightlife.
Much more likely than the average consumer to:	Much more likely than the average consumer to:
Shop at Bloomingdale's	Order from Priceline.com
Travel to Asia	Travel to South America
Read *Dwell*	Read *Cigar Aficionado*
Watch Independent Film Channel	Watch *South Park*
Drive an Audi A3	Drive a Nissan Altima Hybrid

Source: Data from "My Best Segments," Nielsen Company.

- New Netherland: The greater New York City area that was settled by the Dutch and retains Dutch values including tolerance for diversity.
- Greater Appalachia: The area from southwestern Pennsylvania and West Virginia, down through the lower Midwest, down through Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, and into Oklahoma and Texas. It's characterized by a commitment to individual liberty and a suspicion of outsiders.
- El Norte: Southwestern Texas and the Mexican border regions in New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Hispanic culture dominates and people are independent and self-sufficient.
- The Left Coast: The sliver of land that runs up the Pacific coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington, and also includes Juneau, Alaska, and coastal British Columbia. There is a focus on utopianism and self-expression. People often clash with people from the interior portions of their home states.

How can marketers tailor their efforts to recognize these geographical differences? One popular technique is Nielsen's **PRIZM** system. This system classifies every U.S. Zip Code into 1 of 66 categories, ranging from the most affluent "Blue-Blood Estates" to the least well-off "Public Assistance." It terms a resident of southern California "Money & Brains" if he or she lives in Encino (Zip Code 91316), whereas someone living in Sherman Oaks (Zip Code 91423) is a "Young Influential."

Residents of different clusters display marked differences in their consumption of products, from annuities to Ziploc bags. The system also ranks these groupings by income, home value, and occupation (i.e., a rough index of social class) on a ZQ (Zip Quality) scale. Table 13.1 provides an idea of how dramatically different the consumption patterns of two clusters can be. It compares consumption data for two different clusters primarily composed of young people without kids. You can check out your own Zip Code at MyBestSegments.com.[105]

Although consumers in two different clusters can purchase a product at an equivalent rate, these similarities end when we take their other purchases into account. These differences highlight the importance of going beyond simple product-category purchase data and demographics to really understand a market (remember the discussion of product complementarity). For example, people in

"Urban Gold Coast," "Money & Brains," and "Blue-Blood Estates" communities buy a lot of high-quality binoculars, but so do those in the "Grain Belt," "New Homesteaders," and "Agri-Business" clusters. The difference is that the former groups use the binoculars to watch birds and other wildlife, whereas the latter use them to help line up the animals in their gun sights. Furthermore, whereas the bird watchers do a lot of foreign travel, listen to classical music, and host cocktail parties, the bird hunters travel by bus, like country music, and belong to veterans' clubs.

MyLab Marketing

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. **Consumer identity derives from "we" as well as "I."**

   Consumers identify with many groups that share common characteristics and identities, but some of these affiliations are more central to how we define ourselves. Subcultures are large groups that exist within a society, and membership in them often gives marketers a valuable clue about individuals' consumption decisions. Important sources of consumer identity include gender, race/ethnicity, religion, age, and place of residence.

2. **Our memberships in ethnic, racial, and religious subcultures often guide our consumption choices.**

   A person's ethnic origins, racial identity, and religious background often are major components of his or her identity. African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans are the three most important ethnic/racial subcultures in the United States. Key issues to reach members of racial/ethnic subcultures are consumers' degree of acculturation into mainstream U.S. society and the recognition of important cultural differences among subgroups (e.g., Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Mexicans).

3. **Marketers increasingly use religious and spiritual themes to talk to consumers.**

   The quest for spirituality influences demand in product categories including books, music, and cinema. Although the impact of religious identification on consumer behavior is not clear, some differences among religious subcultures do emerge. Marketers need to consider the sensibilities of believers carefully when they use religious symbolism to appeal to members of different denominations.

4. **Our traditional notions about families are outdated.**

   We've seen that subcultural identities revolve around shared experiences and perspectives. That's why it's so important for marketers to think about both when consumers are born and the family structure into which they're born. Age groups and the family unit help to shape people's experiences, needs, and preferences.

5. **"Birds of a feather flock together."**

   Geodemography refers to analytical techniques that combine data on consumer expenditures and other socioeconomic factors with geographic information about the areas in which people live to identify consumers who share common consumption patterns. Researchers base this approach on the common assumption that "birds of a feather flock together." Marketers can increase the efficiency of their messages when they focus on the similarities among consumers who choose to live in the same place.

KEY TERMS

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REVIEW

13-1 What is a subculture?
13-2 What is the difference between a high-context and a low-context culture? What is an example of this difference?
13-3 Why is it difficult to identify consumers in terms of their ethnic subculture membership?
13-4 What is deethnicization? Give an example.
13-5 Why are Hispanic American consumers attractive to marketers?
13-6 What is *acculturation*? How does it differ from *enculturation*?
13-7 Who are acculturation agents? Give two examples.
13-8 Describe the processes involved when a person assimilates into a new host culture.
13-9 Why are Asian Americans an attractive market segment? Why can they be difficult for marketers to reach?
13-10 How do religious subcultures affect consumption decisions?
13-11 What is a *nuclear family*, and how is it different from an *extended family*?
13-12 What are *boomerang kids*?
13-13 What is the *FLC*, and why is it important to marketers?
13-14 What is an *age cohort*, and why is it of interest to marketers?
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13-16 What are *tweens*, and why are so many marketers interested in them?
13-17 What are some business categories that stand to benefit most from the increasing affluence and vitality of the senior market?

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

13-18 Among Facebook's various problems over the last few years is that some of the country's leading employers placed recruitments ads on the platform that were limited to particular age groups. Facebook's ability to target very specific profiles has raised concerns about potential age discrimination in hiring. Some companies argue that this strategy is permissible because targeting older people for entry-level jobs would be a waste of money. For example, Goldman Sachs said that while about one-quarter of

those who click on job ads are over 65, almost none go on to apply for an analyst job. What's your take on this issue—is social media's ability to finely target very specific consumer groups a plus or a minus?[106]

13-19 Several major advertisers including Corona beer have come under fire recently for showing allegedly racist ads that favor white people over black people. In a Facebook ad for Dove body wash, a black woman removes her brown shirt and the ad then reveals a white woman in a light shirt (Dove later apologized). This is not a new problem: A soap ad that ran in the early 1900s featured a white child asking a black child, "Why doesn't your mamma wash you with Fairy soap?" In 2017 the skin care company Nivea ran a deodorant ad that read, "White is purity." White supremacists on the internet loved it In what some have labeled the most racist ad ever made, a 2016 commercial for the Chinese company Qiaobi's laundry detergent shows an Asian woman who shoves a detergent pod into a black man's mouth and puts him in a washing machine, from which he emerges as a light-skinned Asian.[107] While you would think these ads are screened for such insulting content, apparently many still make it through. Should advertisements be more thoroughly screened, or are people just overreacting to these attempts at humor? How might the system be changed to avoid these blunders?

13-20 Geodemographic techniques assume that people who live in the same neighborhood have other things in common as well. Why do they make this assumption, and how accurate is it?

13-21 Should members of a religious group adapt marketing techniques that manufacturers customarily use to increase market share for their secular products? Why or why not?

13-22 Several years ago R. J. Reynolds announced plans to test market a menthol cigarette called Uptown specifically to African American consumers. According to the company, about 70 percent of African American smokers prefer menthol, more than twice the average rate. After market research showed that blacks tend to open cigarette packs from the bottom, the company decided to pack Uptowns with the filters facing down. Reynolds cancelled its plans after private health groups and government officials protested. Does a company have the right to exploit a subculture's special characteristics, especially to increase sales of a harmful product such as cigarettes? What about the argument that virtually every business that follows the marketing concept designs a product to meet the needs and tastes of a preselected segment?

13-23 Discuss the pros and cons of the voluntarily childless movement.

13-24 When they identify and target newly divorced couples, do you think marketers exploit these couples' situations? Are there instances in which you think marketers may actually be helpful to them? Support your answers with examples.

13-25 Born-again Christian groups have been instrumental in organizing boycotts of products advertised on shows they find objectionable, especially those that they feel undermine family values. Church leaders can encourage consumption but, more importantly, they can also *discourage* it—sometimes with powerful effects. The Disney Corporation discovered how effective these movements can be when the Southern Baptist Convention voted to persuade all its members to boycott Disney's operations.[108] The church instituted its anti-Mickey rebellion to protest the "Gay Days" at the theme parks and advocated a view that Disney had a radical homosexual agenda that it promoted through its broadcasts. Soon other organizations joined the cause, including the American Family Association, the General Council of the Assemblies of God, the Congregational Holiness Church, the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, and the Free Will Baptists. The fallout from the boycott was significant; Disney was forced to lay off 4,000 employees.[109] Do religious groups have a right or a responsibility to dictate what advertising a network should carry?

13-26 Religious symbolism appears in advertising, even though some people object to this practice. For example, a French Volkswagen ad for the relaunch of the Golf showed a modern version of *The Last Supper* with the tagline, "Let us rejoice, my friends, for a new Golf has been born."[110] A group of clergy in France sued the company and the ad was removed from 10,000 billboards. One of the bishops involved in the suit said, "Advertising experts have told us that ads aim for the sacred in order to shock, because using sex does not work anymore." Do you agree? Should religion be used to market products? Do you find this strategy effective or offensive? When and where is this appropriate, if at all?

13-27 The chapter describes efforts by some mainstream marketers to appeal to Muslim consumers by making halal products. Given the political attitudes some Americans hold regarding Muslims, is this

a dangerous strategy or a courageous one? What are the potential pitfalls of this approach, and how would you handle it?

13-28 The chapter discussed the dramatic changes in family structure today. The reality is that many other *types* of families continue to grow rapidly as well. Indeed, some experts argue that as traditional family living arrangements wane, we place even greater emphasis on siblings, close friends, and other relatives who provide companionship and social support.[111] Some people join *intentional families*, groups of unrelated people who meet regularly for meals and who spend holidays together.[112] Indeed, for some the act of meeting together to consume homemade food plays a central role in defining family: It is a symbolic way to separate a family unit from other social groups by allowing the cook(s) to personalize the meal and express affection via the effort that went into preparing the feast.[113] What evidence do you find of the impact of nontraditional family structures? How will these alternative lifestyles change the way we think about consumer behavior?

13-29 This chapter describes members of Gen Y as much more traditional and team oriented than their older brothers and sisters. Do you agree?

13-30 Many parents worry about the time their kids spend online, but this activity may actually be good for them. A study by the MacArthur Foundation claims that surfers gain valuable skills to prepare them for the future. The study also finds that concerns about online predators are overblown; most kids socialize with friends they know from other situations like school or camp.[114] What's your take on this? Are concerns about excessive web surfing unjustified?

13-31 What are some of the positives and negatives of targeting college students? Identify some specific marketing strategies you feel have either been successful or unsuccessful. What characteristics distinguish the successes from the failures?

▶ APPLY

13-32 Locate current examples of marketing stimuli that depend on an ethnic or religious stereotype to communicate a message. How effective are these appeals?

13-33 To understand the power of ethnic stereotypes, conduct your own poll. For a set of ethnic groups, ask people to anonymously provide attributes (including personality traits and products) most likely to characterize each group, using the technique of free association where they simply say what comes to mind when you mention each group. How much agreement do you obtain across respondents? To what extent do the characteristics derive from or reflect negative stereotypes? Compare the associations for an ethnic group between actual members of that group and nonmembers.

13-34 Observe the interactions between parents and children in the cereal section of a local grocery store (remember to take earplugs with you). Prepare a report on the number of children who expressed preferences, how they expressed their preferences, and how parents responded, including the number who purchased the child's choice.

13-35 Select a product category and, using the life-cycle stages this chapter describes, list the variables likely to affect a purchase decision for the product by consumers in each stage of the cycle.

13-36 Consider three important changes in the modern family structure. For each, find an example of a marketer who seems to be conscious of this change in its product communications, retailing innovations, or other aspects of the marketing mix. If possible, also try to find examples of marketers who have failed to keep up with these developments.

13-37 One study asked young people in the United States and the Netherlands to write essays about what is "cool" and "uncool" and to create visual collages that represent what it means to be cool.[115] The researchers found that cool has multiple meanings to kids in these two cultures. Some of the common dimensions include having charisma, being in control, and being a bit aloof. Many of the respondents also agreed that being cool is a moving target: The harder you try to be cool, the more uncool you are! Here are some of their actual responses:

- "Cool means being relaxed, to nonchalantly be the boss of every situation, and to radiate that" (Dutch female)
- "Cool is the perception from others that you've got 'something' which is macho, trendy, hip, etc." (Dutch male)
- "Cool has something standoffish, and at the same time, attractive" (Dutch male)
- "Being different, but not too different. Doing your own thing, and standing out, without looking desperate while you're doing it" (American male)

- "When you are sitting on a terrace in summer, you see those machos walk by, you know, with their mobile [phones] and their sunglasses. I always think, 'Oh please, come back to earth!' These guys only want to impress. That is just so uncool" (Dutch female)
- "When a person thinks he is cool, he is absolutely uncool" (Dutch female)
- "To be cool we have to make sure we measure up to it. We have to create an identity for ourselves that mirrors what we see in magazines, on TV, and with what we hear on our stereos" (American male)

Replicate this study in your area. Recruit a group of teenagers to construct individual collages that represent what they feel is "cool." Analyze their choices—what patterns do you see?

13-38 One pair of researchers took an in-depth look at how 13- and 14-year olds integrate the computer into their lives, and how they use it to express their *cyberidentities*. These tweens have limited mobility in real life (too young to drive), so they use the computer to transport themselves to other places and modes of being. The researchers explored the metaphors these kids use when they think about their computers. For some, the PC is a "fraternity house" where they can socialize; it also can be a "carnival" where they play games, and an "external brain" that helps with homework.[116] Interview some tweens about their online behaviors. How do they think about their digital devices? What role do they play in their lives?

13-39 Locate one or more consumers (perhaps family members) who have emigrated from another country. Interview them about how they adapted to their host culture. In particular, what changes did they make in their consumption practices over time?

13-40 Interview some retired people. How are they reconstructing their identities? What opportunities do their desires present for marketers?

CASE STUDY

Toyota's Multicultural Ad Campaign—Same Car, But Different Ads for Different Ethnic Groups

As you learned in this chapter, the growing diversity of the U.S. population is a major driver of change and is an important consideration for marketing strategists. Our membership in ethnic subcultures often guides our consumption choices, and may affect the products companies offer, where they are sold, and how promotional messages are communicated. Toyota has been one of the leaders in recognizing this diversity as we can see in the multicultural ad campaign for its popular Camry automobile.

Major companies have employed ethnically targeted marketing for many years, with companies taking different approaches to try to reach consumers in various groups. Some have created separate campaigns, ads, slogans, and product packaging related to the target ethnic group, referred to as "multicultural marketing." Other companies have chosen a "total marketing" approach with ads that try to appeal to a wide variety of ethnic market segments at the same time.[117] Toyota's Camry campaign combines both approaches.

In the ad called "Strut," an African-American man orders pizza and chooses pickup over delivery so that he can enjoy driving his Camry. The music track is hip-hop and the image of a strutting peacock flashes by before showing the driver's new red Camry. "What we found with African-Americans is style really comes to the forefront in how we look at vehicles," said Lewis Williams, of ad agency Burrell. "We see automobiles as extensions of ourselves, so style is really important." Vicki Bolton of the agency noted that research added the idea of "strutting" because "we wanted people to take notice of us."[118]

For the ad targeted toward Asian-Americans, Toyota wanted to show that driving a Camry could bring out the more emotional and affectionate side of a father who is driving his daughter home from baseball practice. "Captivating" was designed to "highlight a not-often-seen behavior [among Asian-American fathers]," said Julia Huang, chief executive of agency interTrend.[119]

"Rebellious" is the name of the ad targeted at Hispanic consumers. In it, a young man zooms down the highway and sees on the car's display that his mother is calling his phone. After a brief hesitation, he decides to decline the call, breaking into a smile as he enjoys the drive. This is a bold move, given the strong role that family (and particularly mothers) play in Hispanic culture.[120] The ad is in Spanish and, in developing it, the creators considered how long the targeted viewers had been in the U.S., if they were born here, which language they speak, and the culture they feel more connected to.[121]

A final ad, "Thrill," adopts the total marketing approach. It features a mix of white and non-white actors who temporarily forget about their daily duties as they experience unworried joyrides in a Camry until their phones ring, prompting them to get back to their responsibilities. In each scenario, the car races down the road and the drivers' faces brighten as they speed on to the soundtrack of Queen's "Don't Stop Me Now."[122] The commercial was designed to appeal to a market comprised of many cultures, what agency Saatchi & Saatchi calls the "the transcultural mainstream."[123]

Regardless of which of the ads best represents your cultural experience, you may find them either attractive or offensive. A frequent criticism of ethnically targeted advertising is that it portrays stereotypes (for example, playing hip-hop when the African-American drives). Marketing differently based on ethnicity could also suggest that Toyota is segregating its consumers based on race and ethnicity.[124] Advocates of a "total marketing" approach point out that young consumers may not identify with just one segment.[125] Others wonder if specialized ads like Toyota's are needed at all, given the increased diversity of the U.S. population.[126]

To be sensitive to these issues, Toyota hired different ad agencies with expertise in communicating with the different ethnic groups it targets. Each of these agencies employs people who are members of the targeted group.[127] Vicki Bolton of the Burrell agency that created the African-American-focused ad said that while millennials may have broader social circles, " . . . when they come home at the end of the day, they still want to see messaging with people that are reflective of them." Regarding the Asian-American ad messaging, Julia Huang, of interTrend argues that characterizing that group as placing a priority on family and education is " . . . not really a stereotype—it really is a core value that is embraced." The characters in the Hispanic-American ads " . . . are everyday people who portray different situations based on strong Hispanic insights . . . ," according to the Conill agency that developed them.[128]

Venturing into multicultural advertising risks offending some consumers, but offers the opportunity to communicate more effectively with others for whom a culturally sensitive message is appealing. "People like to see people of all ethnicities in what they're seeing because that's the life they're living in most of the U.S. today," said Jack Hollis, group vice president and general manager of the Toyota brand, but, he added, "if a person of any group is looking for communication that is like them, that looks like them specifically, the good news is because of the breadth of something like a Camry campaign, they can find it." The process, however, can be tricky. Mark Turner, chief strategy officer of Toyota's agency Saatchi & Saatchi sums it up by saying that culture " . . . is a very complicated and hard thing to understand and get right."[129] Consumers across the cultural spectrum will decide if Toyota and its ad agency partners have been effective in their efforts to appeal to all American automobile shoppers.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 13-1 Advertisers argue that research-based characterizations of ethnic priorities should not be considered stereotyping. What are the potential negative consequences of these characterizations from both a societal and business perspective?

CS 13-2 Agencies who specialize in advertising to a particular ethnic group believe that such promotional messaging shows respect for the priorities and buying power of that ethnic group.[14, 15] Do you agree? What other potentially positive outcomes could be realized through a multicultural campaign?

CS 13-3 Those who advocate a "total market" approach believe that our diverse population is better served by ad campaigns that include a variety of ethnic imagery and messaging. What are the pros and cons of this approach from both a societal and business perspective?

MyLab Marketing

If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

13-41 Some industry experts feel that it's acceptable to appropriate symbols from another culture even if the buyer does not know their original meaning. They argue that even in the host society there is often disagreement about these meanings. What do you think?

13-42 What advice would you give to a marketer who wants to appeal to Gen Y? What are major do's and don'ts? Can you provide some examples of specific marketing attempts that work or don't work?

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14

Culture

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES When you finish reading this chapter you will understand why:

14-1 A culture is a society's personality.

14-2 Myths are stories that express a culture's values, and in modern times marketing messages convey these values to members of the culture.

14-3 We describe products as either sacred or profane, and it's not unusual for some products to move back and forth between the two categories.

14-4 New products, services, and ideas spread through a population over time. Different types of people are more or less likely to adopt them during this diffusion process.

14-5 Many people and organizations play a role in the fashion system that creates and communicates symbolic meanings to consumers.

14-6 Western (and particularly U.S.) culture has a huge impact around the world, although people in other countries don't necessarily ascribe the same meanings to products as we do.

Stephanie is at her wits' end. It's bad enough that she has a deadline looming on that new Christmas promotion for her gift shop. Now, there's trouble on the home front as well: Her son Mark had to go and flunk his driver's license road exam, and he's just about suicidal because he feels he can't be a "real man" if he doesn't have a license. To top things off, now she'll have to postpone her much-anticipated vacation to Disney World with her stepdaughter Arya because she just can't find the time to get away.



Source: Rob Marmion/Shutterstock.

When Stephanie meets up with her buddy Lynn at their local Starbucks for their daily "retreat," her mood starts to brighten. Somehow the calm of the café rubs off as she savors her *cappuccino grande*. Lynn consoles her with the ultimate remedy to beat the blues: Go home, take a nice long bath, and then consume a quart of Starbucks Espresso Swirl ice cream. Yes, that's the ticket. It's amazing how the little things in life can make such a big difference. As she strolls out the door, Stephanie makes a mental note to get Lynn a really nice Christmas gift this year. She's earned it.

OBJECTIVE 14-1
A culture is a society's personality.

Cultural Systems

Stephanie's experiences illustrate how everyday events reflect deeper meanings; overcoming challenges like a driver's test, planning "pilgrimages" to destinations like Disney World, choosing gifts to thank others, even calming ourselves with that daily latte or bowl of favorite ice cream. Marketers can only appreciate the importance of these activities when they understand what they signify and that's why this final chapter will explore some of the underlying elements. **Culture** is a society's personality. It includes both abstract ideas, such as values and ethics, and material objects and services, such as the automobiles, clothing, food, art, and sports a society produces. Put another way, it's the accumulation of shared meanings, rituals, norms, and traditions among the members of an organization or society.

We simply can't understand consumption unless we consider its cultural context: Culture is the "lens" through which people view products. Ironically, the effects of culture on consumer behavior are so powerful and far-reaching that it's sometimes difficult to grasp their importance. We don't always appreciate this power until we encounter a different culture. Suddenly, many of the assumptions we take for granted about the clothes we wear, the food we eat, or the way we address others no longer seem to apply. The effect when we encounter such differences can be so great that the term *culture shock* is not an exaggeration.

Our culture determines the overall priorities we attach to different activities and products, and it also helps us decide whether specific products will satisfy these priorities. A product that provides benefits to members of a culture at any point in time has a much better chance to achieve marketplace acceptance. For example, U.S. culture began to emphasize the concept of a fit, trim body as an ideal of appearance in the mid-1970s. The premium consumers put on thinness, which stemmed from underlying values such as mobility, wealth, and a focus on the self, greatly contributed to Miller's success when the brewer launched its Lite beer. However, a decade earlier (in the 1960s) when Gablinger's introduced a similar low-cal beer, the product failed. This beverage was "ahead of its time" because U.S. beer drinkers during that era (who were almost all men) weren't worried about cutting down on calories.

The relationship between consumer behavior and culture is a two-way street. On the one hand, consumers are more likely to embrace products and services that resonate with a culture's priorities at any given time. On the other hand, it's worthwhile for us to understand which products do get accepted, because this knowledge provides a window into the dominant cultural ideals of that period. Consider, for example, some U.S. products that successfully reflected dominant values during their time:

- The TV dinner reflected changes in family structure and the onset of a new informality in U.S. home life.
- Cosmetics made from natural materials without animal testing reflected consumers' apprehensions about pollution, waste, and animal rights.
- Condoms packaged in pastel carrying cases for female buyers signaled changes in attitudes toward sexual responsibility and openness.

Dimensions of Culture

Culture is not static. It evolves continually as it synthesizes old ideas with new ones. A *cultural system* consists of these functional areas:[1]

- **Ecology**—The way a system adapts to its habitat. The technology a culture uses to obtain and distribute resources shapes its ecology. The Japanese, for example,

greatly value products that make efficient use of space because of the cramped conditions in their urban centers.[2]

- **Social structure**—The way people maintain an orderly social life. This includes the domestic and political groups that dominate the culture (e.g., the nuclear family versus the extended family; representative government versus dictatorship).
- **Ideology**—The mental characteristics of a people and the way they relate to their environment and social groups. As we saw in Chapter 12, they share a common *worldview* that includes ideas about principles of order and fairness. They also share an *ethos*, or a set of moral and aesthetic principles. We appreciate the power of these beliefs when they clash with other cultures. For example, when they go to the beach many Muslim women wear "burkinis" that cover everything—the face, hands, and feet—to conform to Islamic standards of modesty. In an effort to protect its status as a secular society, France banned women from wearing the garments. The ban was eventually overturned, but the conflict continues and other Western countries are considering similar rules.[3]

The Yin and Yang of Marketing and Culture

Even though inner-city teens represent only 8 percent of all people in that age group and have incomes significantly lower than their white suburban counterparts, their influence on young people's musical and fashion tastes is much greater than these numbers suggest. "Urban" fashion now is a mainstay in the heartland, as major retail chains pick up on the craze and try to lure legions of young middle-class shoppers. Macy's and JC Penney carry Sean John and FUBU ("for us by us"); labels like Versace, Tommy Hilfiger, Enyce, Ecko, Nautica, and Affliction are standard issue for junior high kids. Websites like Krunkgrillz.com and Hiphopbling.com sell other emblems of hip-hop such as "pimp cups," gold plated "grillz," and Bellagio spoke rims.[4] Why does this subculture influence the mass market so strongly?

Outsider heroes—whether John Dillinger, James Dean, or Dr. Dre—who achieve money and fame without being hemmed in by societal constraints have always fascinated Americans. That helps to explain the devotion of many white suburban teens to the urban music scene. As one executive of a firm that researches urban youth noted, "People resonate with the strong anti-oppression messages of rap, and the alienation of blacks."[5] It's common for mainstream culture to modify symbols from "cutting-edge" subcultures for a larger audience to consume. As this occurs, these cultural products undergo a process of **cooptation** in which outsiders transform their original meanings.[6] The spread of hip-hop fashions and music is only one example of what happens when the marketing system takes a set of subcultural meanings, reinterprets them, and reproduces them for mass consumption.

Of course, the countercultures that originate these movements don't just sit still for this. They develop strategies to reclaim their symbols and practices. For example, large food manufacturers and retailers today recognize shifting consumer tastes as they co-opt vegan or organic food cultures and repackage food products for mainstream grocery shoppers. Walmart sells organic food, and the huge conglomerate ConAgra purchased Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream. In response, adherents of a **locavore** lifestyle that emphasizes the purchase of locally produced meat and vegetables may find alternative channels of distribution, such as farmers' markets, to sell their "authentic" versions to true believers.[7]

Now let's look at how our culture creates these meanings—which often reside in everyday products—and how these meanings move through a society. As Figure 14.1 shows, the advertising and fashion industries play a key role in this process; they link functional products with symbolic qualities such as sexiness, sophistication, or just

plain "cool." These goods, in turn, impart their meanings to us as we use these products to create and express our identities.[8]

Cultural Movement

Watercolor tats. Alexandre Birman textured-lamé sandals. The Weeknd. Blue velvet couches. Fortnite. CBD gummy bears. Bitmojis. Selfies. Teslas. Costa Rican eco-tours. We inhabit a world that brims with different styles and possibilities. The food we eat, the cars we drive, the clothes we wear, the places we live and work, the music we listen to—the ebb and flow of popular culture and fashion influences all of them.

At times we may feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of choices available to us in the marketplace. A person who wants to choose something as routine as a necktie or a lipstick shade might look at hundreds of alternatives! Despite this seeming abundance, however, the options available to us at any point in time actually represent only a small fraction of the *total* set of possibilities. Figure 14.2 shows that when we select certain alternatives over others—whether automobiles, dresses, computers, recording artists, political candidates, religions, or even scientific methodologies—our choice actually is only the culmination of a complex filtration process that resembles a funnel. Many possibilities initially compete for adoption; most of them drop out of the mix as they make their way down the path from conception to consumption. We call this winnowing-out process **collective selection**.

We don't form our tastes and product preferences in a vacuum. The many images mass media present to us drive our choices, as well as our observations of those around us, and even our desires to live in the fantasy worlds marketers create in the ads we see all around us. These options constantly evolve and change. A clothing style or type of cuisine that is "hot" one year may be "out" the next.

Hip-hop was born way back in 1968 developed by a DJ in the Bronx, New York. The music and fashions that grew up around it grew over the years and began to garner mainstream status when Columbia Records bought the Def Jam record label in 1985. By the mid-2000s, entrepreneurs branched out into other categories including sports (Jay Z became part-owner of what is now the Brooklyn Nets), beverages (Nelly launched Pimp Juice, an energy drink), and fragrances (Queen by Queen Latifah, Pink Friday by Nicki Minaj, Girl by Pharrell Williams). Ghostface Killah sold a $500 action figure of himself; it came with a mixtape, a real 14k gold chain, and a chalice lined with Swarovski crystals. Eventually hip-hop grew beyond its U.S. roots as artists in other countries (even an Aboriginal in Australia) developed their

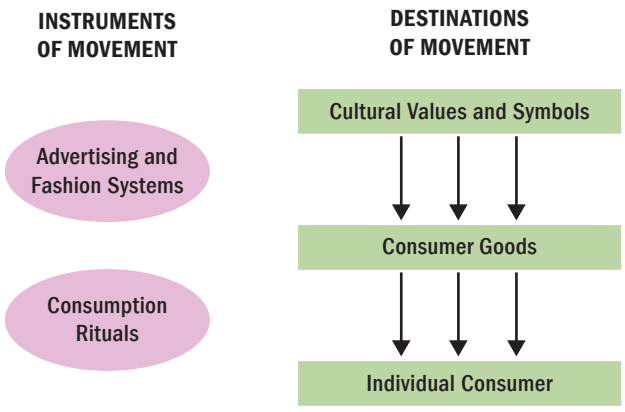


Figure 14.1 THE MOVEMENT OF MEANING

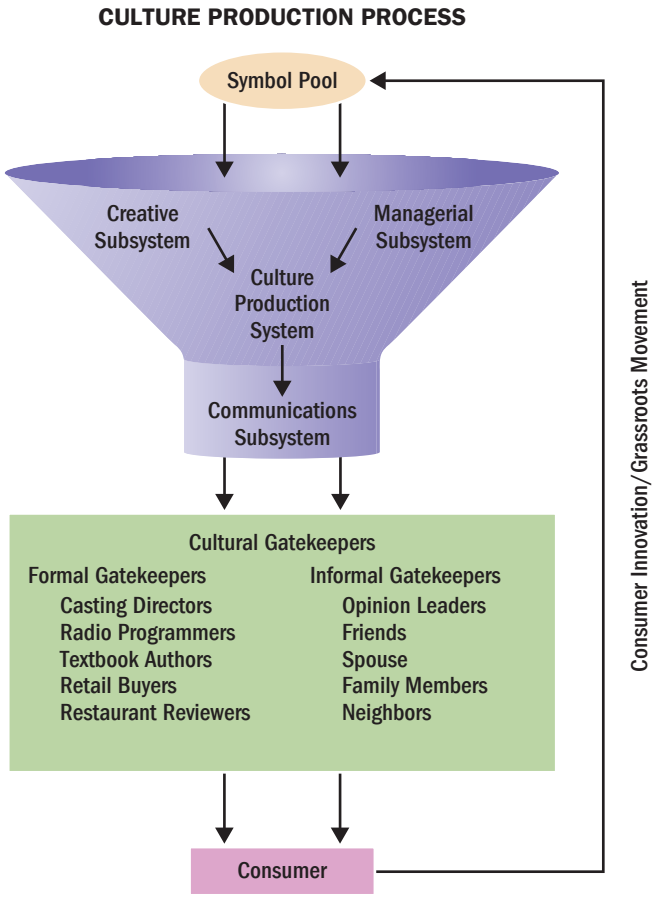


Figure 14.2 THE CULTURE PRODUCTION PROCESS

own interpretations. The widespread adoption of hip-hop style illustrates some of the characteristics of fashion and popular culture:

- Styles reflect more fundamental societal trends (e.g., politics and social conditions).
- A style begins as a risky or unique statement by a relatively small group of people and then spreads as others become aware of it.
- Styles usually originate as an interplay between the deliberate inventions of designers and businesspeople and spontaneous actions by ordinary consumers who modify these creations to suit their own needs. Designers, manufacturers, and merchandisers who anticipate what consumers want will succeed in the marketplace. In the process, they help to fuel the fire when they encourage distribution of the item—especially if they persuade opinion leaders to use it first.
- Cultural products travel widely, often across countries and even continents.
- Influential people in the media and increasingly everyday "influencers" who are active in social media play a significant role in deciding which items will succeed.
- Most styles eventually wear out as people continually search for new ways to express themselves and marketers scramble to keep up with these desires.
- The cultural selection process never stops, so when styles become obsolete others wait to replace them in popular culture.

No single designer, company, or advertising agency creates popular culture. Many parties contribute to every hit song, hot car, or new clothing style. A **culture production system (CPS)** is the set of individuals and organizations that create and market a cultural product.[9] The structure of a CPS determines the types of products it creates. Factors such as the number and diversity of competing systems and the amount of innovation versus conformity each influence the selection of products from which we choose at any point in time. For example, an analysis of the country/western music industry showed that the hit records it produces are similar to one another when a few large companies dominate the industry, but when a greater number of labels compete we see more diversity in musical styles.[10] Table 14.1 illustrates some of the many cultural specialists who jointly create a hit CD like singer Beyoncé's platinum album *4*.

A culture production system has three major subsystems:

1. **A *creative subsystem*** to generate new symbols and products
2. **A *managerial subsystem*** to select, make tangible, produce, and manage the distribution of new symbols and products
3. **A *communications subsystem*** to give meaning to the new product and provide it with a symbolic set of attributes

An example of the three components of a culture production system for a music release is (1) a singer (e.g., singer Beyoncé, a creative subsystem); (2) a company (e.g., Columbia Records distributes Beyoncé's CDs, a managerial subsystem); and (3) the advertising agencies and corporations such as PepsiCo that work with the singer's company Parkwood Entertainment to promote her music and arrange for her appearances in venues including the Super Bowl and even on a limited edition set of Pepsi soda cans.[11]

Many judges or "tastemakers" have a say in the products we consider. These **cultural gatekeepers** filter the overflow of information as it travels down

TABLE 14.1 Cultural Specialists in the Music Industry

Specialist	Functions
Songwriter(s)	Compose music and lyrics; must reconcile artistic preferences with estimates of what will succeed in the marketplace
Performer(s)	Interpret music and lyrics; may be formed spontaneously, or may be packaged by an agent to appeal to a predetermined market (e.g., The Monkees, Menudo, and New Kids on the Block)
Teachers and coaches	Develop and refine performers' talents
Agents	Represent performers to record companies
A&R (artist & repertoire) executives	Acquire artists for the record label
Publicists, image consultants, designers, stylists	Create an image for the artists that is transmitted to the buying public
Recording technicians, producers	Create a recording to be sold
Marketing executives	Make strategic decisions regarding performer's appearances, ticket pricing, promotional strategies, and so on
Video directors	Interpret the song visually to create a music video that will help to promote the record
Music reviewers	Evaluate the merits of a recording for listeners
Disc jockeys, radio program directors	Decide which records will be given airplay and/or placed in the radio stations' regular rotations
Music store owners	Decide which of the many records produced will be stocked and/or promoted heavily in the retail environment. Soon to be obsolete in today's streaming environment?



Cultural gatekeepers' choices often are influences by products and images in other, unrelated categories.
Source: Tiziana Fabi/AFP/Getty Images.

the "funnel." Gatekeepers include movie, restaurant, and car reviewers; interior designers; disc jockeys; retail buyers; magazine editors; and increasingly a fan base that obsessively follows and shares the latest gossip, styles, TV and film plots, and other pieces of popular culture. Collectively, social scientists call this set of agents the *throughput sector*.[12]

High and Low Culture

Question: What do Beethoven and Drake have in common? Although we associate both the famous composer and the rap singer with music, many would argue that the similarity stops there. Culture production systems create many kinds of products, but we make some basic distinctions.

An **art product** is an object we admire strictly for its beauty or because it inspires an emotional reaction in us (perhaps bliss or perhaps disgust). In contrast, we admire a **craft product** because of the beauty with which it performs some function (e.g., a ceramic ashtray or hand-carved fishing lures).[13] A craft tends to follow a formula that permits rapid production.[14]

To appreciate this distinction, consider the phenomenal success of the late artist Thomas Kinkade. This painter sold 10 million digital reproductions of his work. Even after his death in 2012, his studio continues to mass-produce pictures at a factory in California, where workers reproduce a digital photograph of each original thousands of times onto thin plastic film they glue to canvasses. Then "high-lighters" sit along an assembly line where they dab oil paint onto set spots. The company also licenses images that appear on coffee mugs, La-Z-Boy recliners, and even a romance novel cover.[15]

As Kinkade's "formula for success" demonstrates, the distinction between high and low culture is not as clear as it used to be. In addition to the possible class bias that drives such a distinction (i.e., we assume that the rich have culture but the poor do not), today high and low culture blend together in interesting ways. In addition to the appliances, tires, and cereals it sells by the case, the warehouse club Costco stocks fine art, including limited-edition lithographs by Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, and Joan Miró.

A multinational team of consumer researchers extended the study of high and low art to the realm of **street art** where artists create paintings, murals, and other pieces in public places. They identified numerous sites where the art became an



Characters from popular culture often serve as a form of "shorthand" for companies the world over to communicate with their customers. This ad is from Nigeria but the figures in it are familiar to people in many countries.
Source: Courtesy of Noah's Ark Communications Ltd.

instrument that was used for "transactions" between the artists and the people who lived in the area. Although not all reactions were positive, it was common to observe that people's experiences of public spaces were enhanced because the street art created a feeling of empowerment and ownership in formerly barren places.[16]

Cultural Formulae

Moviegoers won't be surprised to learn that there's not that much new in theaters today. The majority of blockbuster movies are sequels, prequels, or adaptations of successful franchises that include *The Avengers*, *Lego, Harry Potter, Star Wars*, and even *Fast and Furious*. This is a steadily increasing trend: One analysis found that whereas in 1984 about 59 percent of movies from major studios were based on original stories, today this proportion is less than 25 percent.[17]

The reliance on established plots and characters illustrates how mass culture churns out products that aim to please the average taste of a mass audience. Rather than being unique, they are predictable because they follow a well-defined pattern. Many popular art forms, such as detective stories or science fiction, follow a **cultural formula** in which familiar roles and props occur consistently.[18] For example, we expect characters in a classic western to ride horses to get around, while in a science fiction movie they use spaceships; hard-boiled detectives drive a beat-up car, and characters in a family sitcom ride in a minivan. Similarly, a six-gun or rifle is the weapon in a classic western, ray guns appear in science fiction movies, a hard-boiled detective uses a pistol or his fists, and the actors in a family sitcom fight one another with verbal insults. Romance novels are an extreme case of a cultural formula. Computer programs even allow users to "write" their own romances by systematically varying certain set elements of the story.[19]

As members of the creative subsystem rely on these formulae, they tend to *recycle* images as they reach back through time for inspiration. Thus, young people watch retro shows like *Full House* as well as remakes such as *Fuller House*; designers modify beaded dresses inspired by the hit British show *Downton Abbey* that is set in the early 1920s; hip-hop deejays sample sound bites from old songs and combine them in new ways; and Gap runs ads that feature celebrities in khaki pants, including Humphrey Bogart, Gene Kelly, and Pablo Picasso. With easy access to CD burners, digital cameras, and imaging software, virtually anyone can "remix" the past.[20]

OBJECTIVE 14-2
Myths are stories that express a culture's values, and in modern times marketing messages convey these values to members of the culture.

Cultural Stories and Ceremonies

Every culture develops *stories* and *ceremonies* that help its members to make sense of the world. When we hear about some strange practice that goes on in another place, it may be hard to figure out just what these people think they're doing. Yet, our own cultural practices seem quite normal—even though a visitor may find them equally bizarre! Just take a European to a NASCAR race, and you'll understand that culture is relative.

To appreciate how "primitive" belief systems influence our supposedly "modern" rational society, consider the avid interest many of us have in magic. Marketers of health foods, anti-aging cosmetics, exercise programs, and gambling casinos often imply that their offerings have "magical" properties that prevent sickness, old age, poverty, or just plain bad luck. People by the millions play their "lucky numbers" in the lottery, carry rabbits' feet and other amulets to ward off "the evil eye," and own "lucky" clothing.[21]

In a set of studies, researchers examined how people come to regard products as lucky: They looked at **conditioned superstition**; consumers who don't feel they have control over their outcomes come to associate a product that is paired with a reward with the outcome itself (see Chapter 4). You may have observed this process; for example, a friend wears a certain T-shirt to a big game and the team wins. This person may choose to wear the same shirt to future games to "help" the team.[22] An advertising campaign for Budweiser featured fans with bizarre superstitions and the tagline, "It's only weird if it doesn't work."

Interest in the occult tends to spike when members of a society feel overwhelmed or powerless; magical remedies simplify our lives when they give us "easy" answers. Many consumers regard the computer with awe as a sort of "electronic magician" with the ability to solve our problems (or, in other cases, to cause data to magically disappear!).[23] Software developers even supply "wizards" that guide the uninitiated through their programs! Or, we may even think a person's soul inhabits an object: Kids (and maybe some adults as well) believe that when they put on their Air Nikes they magically absorb some of the athletic ability of Michael Jordan or Dwyane Wade. Sound preposterous? The movie *Like Mike* had this exact storyline.

Myths

A **myth** is a story with symbolic elements that represents a culture's ideals. The story often focuses on some kind of conflict between two opposing forces, and its outcome serves as a moral guide for listeners. In this way, a myth reduces anxiety because it provides consumers with guidelines about their world. Most members of a culture learn these stories, but usually we don't really think about their origins.

The familiar *Little Red Riding Hood* myth started as a peasant's tale in 16th-century France, where a girl meets a werewolf on her way to Granny's house (there is historical evidence for a plague of wolf attacks during this time, including several incidents where men were put on trial because they allegedly turned themselves into the deadly animals). The werewolf has already killed Granny, stored her flesh in the pantry, and poured her blood into a bottle. Contrary to the version we know, however, when the girl arrives at the house she snacks on Granny, strips naked, and climbs into bed with the wolf! To make the story even more scandalous, some versions refer to the wolf as a "gaffer" (a contraction of "grandfather"), implying incest as well. This story first appeared in print in 1697; it was a warning to the loose ladies of Louis XIV's court (the author put her in red in that version because red symbolized harlots). Eventually, the brothers Grimm wrote their own version in 1812, but they substituted violence for

sex to scare kids into behaving. And to reinforce the sex-role standards of that time, in the Grimm version, a man rescues the girl from the wolf.[24] So, this myth sends vivid messages about such cultural no-no's as cannibalism, incest, and promiscuity.

In some cases marketers adapt these stories and (perhaps unconsciously) pattern their messages along a mythic structure. Consider, for example, the way that McDonald's takes on "mythical" qualities.[25] The "golden arches" are virtually synonymous with U.S. culture. They offer sanctuary to Americans around the world, who know exactly what to expect once they enter. Basic struggles involving good versus evil play out in the fantasy world McDonald's advertising creates; for example, when Ronald McDonald confounds the Hamburglar. McDonald's even has a "seminary" (Hamburger University) where inductees go to learn the ways of the Golden Arches.

Corporations often have myths and legends in their history. Nike designates senior executives as "corporate storytellers" who explain the company's heritage to the hourly workers at Nike stores. They recount tales about the coach of the Oregon track team who poured rubber into his family waffle iron to make better shoes for his team—the origin of the Nike waffle sole. The stories emphasize the dedication of runners and coaches to reinforce the importance of teamwork. Rookie hires visit the track where the coach worked to help them appreciate the importance of the Nike legends. And rumor has it that senior Nike executives (including the CEO) have a "swoosh" tattoo on their backsides.[26]

Myths serve four interrelated functions in a culture:[27]

1. **Metaphysical**—They help to explain the origins of existence.
2. **Cosmological**—They emphasize that all components of the universe are part of a single picture.
3. **Sociological**—They maintain social order because they authorize a social code for members of a culture to follow.
4. **Psychological**—They provide models for personal conduct.

When we analyze myths, we examine their underlying structures, a technique the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (no relation to the blue jeans company) pioneered. Lévi-Strauss noted that many stories involve **binary opposition**, which represents two opposing ends of some dimension (e.g., good versus evil, nature versus technology).[28] Often a *mediating figure* resolves the conflict between mythical opposing forces; this links the opposites as it shares characteristics of each. For example, many myths are about animals that have human abilities (e.g., a talking snake) to bridge the gap between humanity and nature, just as marketers often give cars (technology) animal names (nature) such as Cougar, Cobra, or Mustang.

We associate myths with the ancient Greeks and Romans, but, in reality, comic books, movies, holidays, and yes, even commercials embody our own cultural myths. Furthermore, researchers report that some people create their own **consumer fairy tales**. They tell stories that include magical agents, donors, and helpers to overcome villains and obstacles as they seek out goods and services in their quest for happy endings.[29]

Smart marketers are more than happy to help us live out these fairy tales. Consider the popularity of the elaborate weddings Disney stages for couples who want to reenact their own version of a popular myth: At Disney World, the princess bride wears a tiara and rides to the park's lakeside wedding pavilion in a horse-drawn coach, complete with two footmen in gray wigs and gold-lamé pants. At the exchange of vows, trumpets blare as Major Domo (he helped the Duke in his quest for Cinderella) walks up the aisle with two wedding bands he gently places in a glass slipper on a velvet pillow. Disney stages about 2,000 of these extravaganzas each year. The company continues to expand the appeal of this myth as it moves

into the bridal gown business. It sells a line of billowing princess gowns complete with crystal tiaras. Fairy tale brides can walk down the aisle costumed as Elsa, Cinderella, Snow White, Belle, Sleeping Beauty, Jasmine, or Ariel.[30]

Many "blockbuster" movies and hit TV shows draw directly on mythic themes. Although dramatic special effects and attractive stars certainly don't hurt, a number of these movies also owe their huge appeal to their presentation of characters and plot structures that follow mythic patterns. Here are three examples of mythic blockbusters:[31]

- *Gone with the Wind*—Myths often take place in times of upheaval such as wars. In this story, the North (which represents technology and democracy) battles the South (which represents nature and aristocracy). The movie depicts a romantic era (the antebellum South) when love and honor were virtues. Following the war, newer values of materialism and industrialization (i.e., modern consumer culture) replace these priorities. The movie paints a picture of a lost era in which humans and nature existed in harmony.
- *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial—E.T.* represents a familiar myth involving messianic visitation. The gentle creature from another world visits Earth and performs miracles (e.g., he revives a dying flower). His "disciples" are neighborhood children; they help him combat the forces of modern technology and an unbelieving secular society. The myth teaches that the humans God chooses are pure and unselfish.
- *Star Trek*—The multiple television series and movies, prequels, and sequels that document the adventures of the starship *Enterprise* also link to myths, such as the story of the New England Puritans who explore and conquer a new continent ("the final frontier"). Encounters with the Klingons mirror skirmishes with American Native people. In addition, at least 13 out of the original 79 episodes employed the theme of a quest for paradise.[32]

Advertisements sometimes represent mythic themes. Commercials for Pepperidge Farm ask consumers to "remember" the good old days (lost paradise) when products were wholesome and natural. Avis famously used the theme of the underdog prevailing over the stronger foe (i.e., David and Goliath).[33] A commercial that encouraged Hispanic consumers to buy more milk featured a female phantom who wails as she walks through a home. She is *La Llorona* (the crying one), a character in a Hispanic myth who murders her children, commits suicide, and roams for all eternity as she seeks her lost family. In this version, however, the moaning phantom makes her way to the refrigerator, only to find an empty milk carton.[34]

Rituals

A **ritual** is a set of multiple, symbolic behaviors that occurs in a fixed sequence and is repeated periodically.[35] Bizarre tribal ceremonies, perhaps involving animal or human sacrifice, may come to mind when you think of rituals. In reality many contemporary consumer activities are ritualistic. Researchers find that when people consume products like chocolate as part of a ritual, they report they enjoy them more than if there is no context.[36]

Consider a ritual that many beer drinkers in the United Kingdom and Ireland hold near and dear to their hearts: the spectacle of a pub bartender "pulling" the perfect pint of Guinness. According to tradition, the slow pour takes exactly 119.5 seconds as the bartender holds the glass at a 45-degree angle, fills it three-quarters full, lets it settle, and tops it off with its signature creamy head. Guinness wanted to make the pull faster so the bar could serve more drinks on a busy night, so it introduced FastPour, an ultrasound technology that dispenses the dark brew in only 25 seconds. You probably guessed the



"Pulling" the perfect pint is a treasured ritual for many Guinness drinkers.
Source: Oli Scarff/Getty Images.

outcome: The brewer had to scrap the system when drinkers resisted the innovation. Note: Diageo (which owns Guinness) hasn't given up, and it continues to experiment with more efficient techniques in markets where this ritual isn't so inbred. A system it calls Guinness Surger shows up in Tokyo bars, many of which are too small to accommodate kegs: The bartender pours a pint from a bottle, places the glass on a special plate, and zaps it with ultrasound waves that generate the characteristic head.[37]

Many businesses benefit because they supply **ritual artifacts** to consumers. These are items we need to perform rituals, such as wedding rice, birthday candles, diplomas, specialized foods and beverages (e.g., wedding cakes, ceremonial wine, or even hot dogs at the ball park), trophies and plaques, band uniforms, greeting cards, and retirement watches.[38] In addition, we often follow a **ritual script** to identify the artifacts we need, the sequence in which we should use them, and who uses them.



Retirement is a milestone that includes ritual artifacts.
Source: bst2012/Fotolia.



A modern take on a wedding ritual.
Source: Courtesy of Prolam Y&R.

Examples include graduation programs, fraternity manuals, and etiquette books. A wedding ceremony is one of our most familiar rituals. If you've ever planned or participated in a wedding, you know the many scripted activities are serious stuff. They're expensive, too: Americans spend $70 billion a year on weddings, more than we spend on pets, coffee, toothpaste, and toilet paper combined.[39]

The massive wedding industry continues to find new ways for consumers to compete in their own *potlach* ceremonies (see Chapter 12) as they vie to offer the most lavish or novel attractions. Destination weddings, online gift registries, save-the-date cards, chocolate fountains; you name it and someone will have it.

A recent trend that favors the spur-of-the moment experience (and relief that the stressful planning is finally over?) over the traditional view of the garment as heirloom—#trashthedress—is for the couple to destroy their bridal gown moments after taking their vows. They hold a photoshoot to document them covering the dress in paint, going for a swim, or running through muddy fields. Instagram already boasts more than 200,000 images of these new rituals.[40]

As we'll see shortly, some rituals symbolize a transition from one status to another. Certainly weddings do that, as two single people become a unit. Many parts of the ritual script hold great meaning, even if most of us today don't remember the original symbolism:[41]

- **Giving away the bride:** Years ago it was common for fathers to use daughters as currency to pay off a debt or to appease a member of a more powerful tribe. The bride wore a veil so that the payee would not refuse her as payment in case she turned out to be less attractive than he desired.



Robots are popping up as guests at weddings. This one is live streaming the event via webcam for people who can't attend the ceremony in person.
Source: Kaku Kurita/Newscom

- **The best man:** His original job was to stand next to the couple to be sure the bride wasn't kidnapped during the ceremony. He was chosen because he was "best" with his sword. Similarly, bridesmaids were instructed to dress similarly to the bride to confuse potential kidnappers and evil spirits; somehow this custom evolved to the design of hideous gowns that make the bride look better by comparison!
- **The tossing of the garter:** At one time the bride and groom were expected to conclude the marriage ceremony and retire immediately to a nearby room to "close the deal." To make the consummation official, witnesses would crowd around the nuptial bed and hope to grab a lucky piece of the bride's gown as it was ripped from her body. Over time, modesty prevailed and the guests had to settle for a symbolic piece of her undergarments.
- **Throwing rice:** Rice is a symbol of fertility; this action is supposed to encourage the newlyweds to get busy and start producing offspring. More recently many couples have replaced rice with butterflies or other items because of the false rumor that birds who eat the rice will die when it expands in their stomachs.



Tailgating is a hugely popular group ritual.
Source: Mike Stobe/National Hockey League/Getty Images.

Many colleges boast unique rituals in which students engage in some scripted group activity, though in recent years some institutions have abolished these because of safety concerns or because they encourage underage drinking. Casualties include spring couch burning at the University of Vermont, and Texas A&M's bonfire on the eve of the annual football game against the University of Texas (the bonfire ritual has since been revived off campus).[43] However, UC–Santa Barbara still offers an Undie Run. Naked Harvard students let off steam just before finals in The Primal Scream, and Yale seniors run naked through campus libraries at the end of each semester to toss candy at underclass students as they cram for finals. Denison University celebrates Naked Week and Tufts has a Naked Quad Run. Are you starting to see a pattern here?

A study the BBDO Worldwide advertising agency conducted illustrates the close relationship between brands and rituals.[44] It labels items that we use to perform our rituals **fortress brands** because once they become embedded in our ceremonies—whether we use them to brush our teeth, drink a beer, or shave—we're unlikely to replace them. The study ran in 26 countries, and the researchers found that, overall, people worldwide practice roughly the same consumer rituals. The agency claims that 89 percent of people always use the same brands in their sequenced rituals; three out of four are disappointed or irritated when something disrupts their ritual or their brand of choice isn't available. For example, the report identifies one common ritual category it calls *preparing for battle*. For most of us this means getting ready for work. Relevant rituals include brushing the teeth, taking a shower or bath, having something to eat or drink, talking to a family member or partner, checking email, shaving, putting on makeup, watching TV or listening to the radio, and reading a newspaper.

Rituals occur at several levels. Some reinforce broad cultural or religious values. Public rituals such as the Super Bowl, presidential inaugurations, and graduation ceremonies are communal activities that affirm our membership in the larger group and reassure us that we are reading from the same script as everyone else.[45] In one study, researchers documented the collective ritual of *head banging* at heavy metal music concerts. They showed how participants, who tend to come from lower economic classes and feel disempowered in other settings, participate collectively in a performance that is a cathartic experience where they are rejuvenated and validated (perhaps this presents an opportunity for companies that sell headache remedies?).[46]

Whether you brush your hair 100 strokes a day or give yourself a pep talk in the mirror before a big date, virtually all of us practice private **grooming rituals**. These ceremonies help us to transition from our private self to our public self. Grooming rituals help to inspire confidence before we face the world, and they "cleanse" us of impurities. When consumers talk about their grooming rituals, some of the dominant themes that emerge from these stories reflect the almost mystical qualities we attribute to grooming products and behaviors. Many people emphasize a before-and-after phenomenon, whereby the person feels magically transformed after she uses certain products (similar to the Cinderella myth).[47]

Some companies that make personal care products understand the power of these rituals and supply the artifacts we need to make them happen. Nair, the depilatory maker, expanded its customer base when it targeted younger girls with its Nair Pretty product—a market the industry calls "first-time hair removers." Researchers conducted focus groups with mothers and their daughters, where they learned that "[w]hen a girl removes hair for the first time, it's a life-changing moment." Some of the respondents actually held hair removal slumber parties, where the moms bought products for the teens to remove their hair. So, instead of a focus on boys or romance, ads for Nair Pretty suggest that the depilatory is a stubble-free path to empowerment. "I am a citizen of the world," reads the ad copy. "I am a dreamer. I am fresh. I am so not going to have stubs sticking out of my legs."[48]

Marketing Opportunity

Tailgating at college and pro ballgames is one of the most visible group rituals around today. According to legend, this practice started in the 19th century when fans had to cook meals in their carriages after they journeyed to the site of a football game. Today tailgating is also big business. A survey Coca-Cola sponsored reported that 41 percent of tailgaters spend more than $500 a season on food and supplies. Now, everyone from food conglomerates to camping suppliers tries to get a piece of these boisterous pregame rituals:[42] The NFL sells $100 million a year of tailgating merchandise, including keg-shaped grills. The Buffalo Bills provide showers and changing rooms in the parking lot, and the Denver Broncos pick a "most valuable tailgater" at each home game. The Houston Texans sponsor "Tailgating 101" classes at a local sporting goods store. For the truly hard-core, California customizer Galpin Motors sells a tailgaters' pickup truck complete with a huge grill, taps for two beer kegs, a blender, and a flip-down TV screen for "only" $70,000.

Grooming rituals express two kinds of binary opposition: *private/public* and *work/leisure*. Many beauty rituals reflect a transformation from a natural state to the social world (as when a woman "puts on her face") or vice versa. To her, a bath may be a cleansing time, a way to wash away the "sins" of the profane world.[49] In these daily rituals, women reaffirm the value their culture places on personal beauty and the quest for eternal youth. This cleansing ritual is clear in ads for Oil of Olay Beauty Cleanser that proclaim, "And so your day begins. The Ritual of Oil of Olay."

Gift-Giving Ritual

In a **gift-giving ritual**, we procure the perfect object, meticulously remove the price tag, carefully wrap the object (where we symbolically change the item from a commodity to a unique good), and deliver it to the recipient.[50] Some research indicates that gift-giving evolves? as a form of social expression. It is more exchange oriented (instrumental) in the early stages of a relationship (where we keep track of exactly what we give and receive to be sure we're not getting ripped off), but it becomes more altruistic as the relationship develops.[51] Gifts can be store-bought objects, homemade items, or services. Some research even argues that music file-sharing systems such as Megaupload (which the government shut down), KaZaa, or Morpheus are really all about gifting. This work finds, for example, clear evidence of the gift-giving norm of *reciprocity*; people who download files but who don't leave their own files available to others are "leeches."[52]

Researchers view gift-giving as a form of *economic exchange* in which the giver transfers an item of value to a recipient, who in turn must reciprocate. However, gift-giving also involves *symbolic exchange.* In fact, researchers who analyzed the personal memoirs of World War II concentration camp inmates found that even in such a brutal environment, where people had to focus primarily on survival, a need to express humanity through generosity prevailed. The authors found that gift-giving, which symbolized recognition of others' plight as well as one's own, was an act of defiance against the dehumanizing existence the camps forced on their prisoners.[53]

Every culture dictates certain occasions and ceremonies to give gifts, whether for personal or professional reasons. The birthday gift ritual alone is a significant contributor to our economy. Each American on average buys six birthday gifts a year—about 1 billion gifts in total.[54] Business gifts are an important way to define and maintain professional relationships. Expenditures on business gifts exceed $1.5 billion per year, and givers take great care to ensure that they purchase the appropriate gifts (sometimes with the aid of professional gift consultants). Most executives believe that corporate gift-giving provides both tangible and intangible results, including improved employee morale and higher sales.[55]

The gift-giving ritual proceeds in three distinct stages:[56]

1. During **gestation** the giver procures an item to mark some event. This event may be either *structural* (i.e., prescribed by the culture, as when people buy Christmas presents) or *emergent* (i.e., the decision is more personal and idiosyncratic).
2. The second stage is **presentation** or the process of gift exchange. The recipient responds to the gift (either appropriately or not), and the donor evaluates this response.
3. In the **reformulation** stage, the giver and receiver redefine the bond between them (either looser or tighter) to reflect their new relationship after the exchange. Negativity can arise if the recipient feels the gift is inappropriate or of inferior



The courtship process often involves gift-giving from men to women, but what happens when the relationship ends? The founders of the website ExBoyfriendJewelry.com provide a market for jilted women who want to make some money and perhaps vent about their ex-partners. The site proclaims, "You don't want it. He can't have it back." Users sell, auction, trade, or simply give away the refuse of their former romances—but they also have to share the story behind every gift.
Source: Courtesy of exboyfriendjewelry.com

quality. For example, the hapless husband who gives his wife a vacuum cleaner as an anniversary present is just asking to sleep on the couch, and the new suitor who gives his girlfriend intimate apparel probably won't score many points. The donor may feel that the response to the gift was inadequate or insincere or a violation of the **reciprocity norm**, which obliges people to return the gesture of a gift with one of equal value.[57] In addition, recent research shows that experiential gifts (e.g., a ticket to a wine-tasting event) strengthen relationships between givers and receivers more than material gifts (e.g., a set of wine glasses), regardless of whether the recipient actually consumes the gift in the company of the gift giver.[58]



Self-gifting is a growing phenomenon, as people reward themselves instead of or in addition to buying for others. .
Source: Courtesy Harvey Nichols. Photography by James Day.

Net Profit

The Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba single-handedly turned a minor holiday into a blockbuster sales event. Traditionally, unmarried Chinese men gathered together each year on November 11 to lament their single status on what was called Bachelors' Day. They chose this date because the calendar shows it as 11.11 (four singles). The company decided to turn this day into an excuse for shopping and in 2009 it began to promote Singles' Day. By 2014, this "anti-Valentine's Day" surpassed Black Friday as the most lucrative online shopping day. The company racked up $9 billion in sales in a 24-hour period. That's a lot of lonely bachelors.[60]

Holiday Rituals

On holidays, we step back from our everyday lives and perform ritualistic behaviors unique to those occasions.[59] Each cultural celebration typically relates to the adventures of one or more special characters, such as St. Patrick in Ireland or Yue Lao in China. These special events require tons of ritual artifacts and scripts. The Thanksgiving holiday script includes serving (in gluttonous portions) foods such as turkey and cranberry sauce that many of us consume only on that day, complaining about how much we've eaten (yet rising to the occasion to find room for dessert), and (for many) a post-meal trip to the couch for the obligatory football game.

Most holidays commemorate a cultural myth, often with a historical (e.g., Miles Standish on Thanksgiving) or imaginary (e.g., Cupid on Valentine's Day) character as the story's hero. These holidays persist because their basic elements appeal to our deep-seated needs.[61]

- **Christmas**—Myths and rituals fill the Christmas holiday, from Santa's adventures at the North Pole to others' adventures under the mistletoe. The meaning of Christmas has evolved quite dramatically during the past few hundred years. In colonial times, Christmas celebrations resembled carnivals and public rowdiness was the norm. Most notable was the tradition of "wassailing," in which roving packs of rowdy young men laid siege to the rich and demanded food and drink. By the end of the 1800s, the mobs were so unruly that city fathers in Protestant America invented a tradition whereby families conducted Christmas gatherings around a tree, a practice they "borrowed" from early pagan rites. In an 1822 poem Clement Clarke Moore, the wealthy son of a New York Episcopal bishop, invented the modern-day myth of Santa Claus. The Christmas ritual slowly changed to a focus on children and gift-giving.[62] One of the most important holiday rituals, of course, stars Santa, a mythical figure for whose arrival children eagerly await (even if their house doesn't have a fireplace). Indeed, an Australian study that analyzed the letters children write to Santa found they specify their brand preferences quite carefully and often employ sophisticated request strategies to be sure they get what they want from the Big Guy.[63] In opposition to Christ, Santa is a champion of materialism. Perhaps it is no coincidence, then, that he appears in stores and shopping malls—secular temples of consumption. Whatever his origins, the Santa Claus myth socializes children because it teaches them to expect a reward when they are good and that people get what they deserve (which may be a lump of coal).
  - Ninety percent of Americans celebrate Christmas in some form.
  - Fifty-six percent of Americans believe that the religious elements of Christmas are emphasized less now than they were in the past, but only 32 percent of Americans say that development bothers them either "a lot" or "some."
  - In 2017, 55 percent of Americans said they celebrated Christmas as a religious holiday, including 46 percent who saw it primarily as a religious holiday and 9 percent who said it was both religious and cultural. Thirty-three percent celebrated it as primarily a cultural holiday.[64]
- **Halloween**—Halloween began as a pagan religious ceremony, but it's clearly a secular event today. However, in contrast to Christmas, the rituals of Halloween (e.g., trick-or-treating and costume parties) primarily involve non-family members. Halloween is an unusual holiday because its rituals are the opposite of many other cultural occasions. In contrast to Christmas, it celebrates evil instead of good and death rather than birth. It encourages revelers to extort treats with veiled threats of "tricks" rather than rewards for the good. Because of these

oppositions, Halloween is an **antifestival**—an event that distorts the symbols we associate with other holidays. For example, the Halloween witch is an inverted mother figure. The holiday also parodies the meaning of Easter because it stresses the resurrection of ghosts, and it mocks Thanksgiving because it transforms the wholesome symbolism of the pumpkin pie into the evil jack-o-lantern.[65] Furthermore, Halloween provides a ritualized, and therefore socially sanctioned, context that allows people to try on new roles: Children can go outside after dark, stay up late, and eat all the candy they like for a night. The otherwise geeky guy who always sits in the back of class dresses as Jason from *Friday the 13th* and turns out to be the life of the party. Halloween of course is big business as well: Americans spend $350 million in costumes, and that's just what they're shelling out for their *pets'* getups.[66]

- **Valentine's Day**—On Valentine's Day, we relax our standards about sex and love and we express feelings we may hide during the rest of the year (in Japan, it's the women who send gifts to the men). A study that investigated Valentine's Day rituals explored how marketing communications help to shape the holiday. The authors identify five familiar classes of rituals:

1 Exchanging gifts and cards
2 Showing affection
3 Going out
4 Preparing and consuming food and drink
5 Special attention to grooming and clothing

Marketing Opportunity

Changing your status from "childless" to "parent" also is a rite of passage—typically one that involves sleep deprivation. But today we're seeing new ceremonies to mark this transition for soon-to-be fathers as Dadchelor parties become popular. Perhaps equal time for Dads is only fair; today in the United States there are more than two million stay-at-home fathers. These "man showers" tend to involve beer and burgers as well as baby gifts. Popular themes (at least on Pinterest) include "'Huggies and Chuggies" and "Poker and Pampers."[69]



Costumes are big business during Halloween, and many of those are for our pets.
Source: Courtesy of Beneva Flowers.

Many of their informants (primarily men) understood the holiday as an obligatory occasion for them to buy their partners expensive, "romantic" gifts. One guy posted this warning: "If you want her happy always remember: the gift has to shine or smell [good] or she should be able to wear it! Otherwise, you're doomed." Some informants expressed negative associations with the holiday, including painful emotions because of broken relationships (or a lack of relationships altogether) and aversion to the "forced" consumption and artificial displays of affection the day requires.[67] But, as much as some of us may grumble about it, this holiday ritual is too powerful to ignore (unless you like sleeping on the couch).

Rites of Passage

What does a dance for recently divorced people have in common with a fraternity Hell Week? Both are modern **rites of passage**, rituals we perform to mark a change in social status. Every society, both primitive and modern, sets aside times for these changes. Some may occur as a natural part of our life cycles (e.g., puberty or death), whereas others are more individual (e.g., getting divorced and reentering the dating market).

Much like the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly, a rite of passage consists of three phases. Let's see how this works for a young person who changes his social status to become a college student:[68]

1. In the first stage, *separation*, he detaches from his original group or status as a high school kid and leaves home for campus.
2. *Liminality* is the middle stage, where he is in limbo between statuses. Think of those bewildered new first-year students who try to find their way around campus during orientation.
3. In the *aggregation* stage, he returns to society with his new status. Our hero returns home for Thanksgiving break as a cocky college "veteran."

Many types of people undergo rites of passage, including fraternity pledges, recruits at boot camp, or novitiates at a convent. We observe a similar transitional state when people prepare for occupational roles. For example, athletes and fashion models typically undergo a "seasoning" process. They leave their normal surroundings (athletes go to training camps, young models move to Paris or New York), they get indoctrinated into a new subculture, and then they return to the real world in their new roles (if they successfully pass the trials of their initiation and don't "get cut").

Death also involves rites of passage. Funeral ceremonies help the living organize their relationships with the deceased. Action is tightly scripted, down to the costumes (e.g., the ritual black attire, black ribbons for mourners, the body laid out in its best clothes) and specific behaviors (e.g., sending condolence cards or holding a wake). Passing motorists award special status to the *cortege* (the funeral motorcade) when they obey the strong social norm that prohibits cutting in as the line of cars proceeds to the cemetery.[70]

Funeral practices vary across cultures, but they're always rich in symbolism. For example, a study of funeral rituals in Ghana found that the community there determines a person's social value *after* he dies; this status depends on the type of funeral his family gives him. One of the main purposes of death rituals is to negotiate the social identities of deceased persons. This occurs as mourners treat the corpse with a level of respect that indicates what they think of him. The Asante people who were the subjects of the study don't view death as something to fear; it's just part of a broader, ongoing process of identity negotiation.[71] People in parts of Madagascar go

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As we've seen, the marriage ritual represents a rite of passage. Social scientists have long studied how people prepare themselves for these transitions, or what we referred to as *liminality*. Now a group of researchers has looked at the way people represent these changes in their online behavior. They identified more than 900 Twitter accounts that belonged to people who posted publicly that they had become engaged and then analyzed their posts both before and after these announcements. The study found that not too surprisingly the people they studied were less likely to use the terms *boyfriend* or *girlfriend* after the engagement and more likely to talk instead about a fiancé or fiancée. They included the word *we* in their posts to a greater extent, and they shared more comments about things they did as a couple such as cooking and traveling together. And, some of the engaged people they studied used social media to vent about the stress of preparing for the wedding. One posted this complaint: "Two of my bridesmaids are coworkers. They have not ONCE asked me if they could help with anything. They don't ask how anything is going."[74]



As concerns about sustainability grow, some consumers look for ways to update burial rituals. This Infinity Burial Suit is seeded with mushrooms that grow on the corpse.
Source: Edmund D Fountain/The New York T/Redux Pictures.

a step further: They regularly remove the bodies of their ancestors from their tombs so that family members can caress the skeletal outlines that protrude through their burial shrouds. This ritual is called a *famadihana*, and many believe this is a time to convey the latest family news to the deceased and ask them for blessings and guidance.[72]

In contrast, Japanese families traditionally take the bodies of their loved ones home from the hospital and sit for an overnight wake followed by a service the next morning in the company of neighbors, colleagues, and friends. Then they send the body to a crematory. But as the population ages rapidly and community ties fray, waiting lists have grown and some people find a new way to bury their dead: The *itai hoteru*, or corpse hotel. Rooms are fitted with small altars and narrow platforms designed to hold coffins. The immediate family sits with the body for a few hours, and then it's "checkout time."[73]

OBJECTIVE 14-3
We describe products as either sacred or profane, and it's not unusual for some products to move back and forth between the two categories.

Sacred and Profane Consumption

Nike had to pull a new line of Pro Tattoo Tech Gear clothing line for women after the news came out that the graphics it used came from a sacred Samoan tattoo that only men wear. Consumers started a Change.org petition online and bombarded the brand's Facebook page with negative comments.[75]

As we saw when we discussed the structure of myths, many types of consumer activities involve the demarcation, or binary opposition, of categories, such as good versus bad, male versus female—or even regular cola versus diet. One of the most important distinctions we find is between the sacred and the profane. **Sacred consumption** occurs when we "set apart" objects and events from normal activities and treat them with respect or awe. Note that in this context the term *sacred* does not necessarily carry a religious meaning, although we do tend to think of religious artifacts and ceremonies as "sacred." **Profane consumption,** in contrast, describes objects and events that are ordinary or everyday; they don't share the "specialness" of sacred ones. Again, note that in this context we don't equate the word *profane* with obscenity, although the two meanings do share some similarities.

Often we're unaware of the distinction between these two domains—until they conflict with one another. A controversy in Thailand illustrates this process. It seems that several Bangkok nightclubs, inspired by the film *Coyote Ugly* about women who dance seductively on a New York bar, began to feature their own "Coyote Girls" dancers. The trend caught on and soon the dancers showed up at auto shows, in shopping malls, and at outdoor festivals. That's when the trouble started: Thailand's queen learned of one performance the girls put on near a Buddhist temple on a holy day that marks the end of a three-month period when Buddhists refrain from impure thoughts and deeds (sort of like the Christian season of Lent). When the queen saw TV news reports about a motorcycle shop that hired Coyote Girls to promote its wares, she was outraged by the intrusion of profane activity into a sacred domain. Coyote Girls are now banned from dancing in public places.[76]

Sacralization

Sacralization occurs when ordinary objects, events, and even people take on sacred meaning. Many consumers regard events such as the Super Bowl and people such as Elvis Presley as sacred. Indeed, virtually anything can become sacred. Skeptical? Consider the website that sells *unlaundered* athletic wear that members of the Dallas Cowboys football team have worn. Former quarterback Troy Aikman's shoes sold for $1,999, and an unwashed practice jersey that retains the sweat of an unknown player goes for $99. Used socks fly out the door at $19.99 a pair. Says the owner, "Fans who have never been able to touch the Cowboys before now have an opportunity."[77]

Objectification occurs when we attribute sacred qualities to mundane items (such as smelly socks). One way that this process occurs is via **contamination** whereby objects we associate with sacred events or people become sacred in their own right. This explains many fans' desire for items that belonged to (or were even touched by) famous people. Even the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, maintains a display that features such "sacred items" as the ruby slippers from *The Wizard of Oz*, a phaser from *Star Trek*, and Archie Bunker's chair from the television show *All in the Family*—all reverently protected behind sturdy display glass.[78]

Do you know any **sneakerheads**? This term describes people who are avid collectors of rare or limited edition "kicks," such as Nike Air Jordans or the Yeezy that rap singer Kanye West designs.[79] The sneakerhead subculture is a fusion of skating and hip-hop styles. It has its own jargon (e.g., "bred" refers to the popular color combination of black and red, and "Grail" describes very rare shoes). Many aficionados tie their shoes in distinctive patterns such as laddered or staggered. Nike's releases dominate the rare kicks market. The company cleverly controls the amount of shoes it offers for sale to keep their value high and motivate collectors to seek them out—often by camping out in front of shoe stores for days at a time before a new model debuts. For these collectors, copping a pair of steezy Quickstrikes is wild and lit up (translation: buying early release, limited edition sneakers is amazing and great). And, it's not a bad way to make a buck for those who are willing to get into the game: Sneakerheads buy and sell more than $1.2 billion worth of rare kicks to one another (i.e., not via Nike) each year.[80]

In addition to museum exhibits that display rare objects, we often set apart mundane products things in collections; when we do so we transform them from profane items to sacred ones. An item is sacralized as soon as it enters a collection, and it takes on special significance to collectors, such as sneakerheads, that outsiders may find hard to comprehend.

Collecting refers to the systematic acquisition of a particular object or set of objects. We distinguish this from **hoarding**, which reflects a reluctance to discard



Sneakerheads are a growing subculture with a passion for collecting vintage and cutting-edge shoes.
Source: Andersphoto/Shutterstock.

used objects.[81] Hoarding is a problem in some cities where residents' refusal to properly dispose of old newspapers, food, or even deceased pets results in fires, eviction, and even the removal of children from the home. A dozen cities run hoarding task forces to combat this problem.[82]

Collecting typically involves both rational and emotional components. On the one hand, avid collectors carefully organize and exhibit their treasures.[83] On the other hand, they are ferociously attached to their collections. A teddy bear collector summed up this fixation: "If my house ever burns down, I won't cry over my furniture, I'll cry over the bears."[84]

Some consumer researchers feel that collectors acquire their "prizes" to gratify their materialism in a socially acceptable manner. When he systematically amasses a collection, the collector "worships" material objects but he doesn't have to feel guilty or petty. Another perspective argues that collecting is actually an aesthetic experience; for many collectors, the pleasure comes from creating the collection. Whatever the motivation, hard-core collectors often devote a great deal of time and energy to maintaining and expanding their collections, so for many this activity becomes a central component of their extended selves (see Chapter 6).[85]

Domains of Sacred Consumption

Sacred consumption events permeate many aspects of our lives. We find ways to "set apart" all sorts of places, people, and events. Note that that "ordinary" consumption is sometimes *not* so ordinary after all.

Sacred Places

A society "sets apart" sacred places because they have religious or mystical significance (e.g., Bethlehem, Mecca, Stonehenge) or because they commemorate some aspect of a country's heritage (e.g., the Kremlin, the Emperor's Palace in Tokyo, the Statue of Liberty, or Ground Zero in Manhattan). *Contamination* makes these places sacred: Something sacred happened on that spot, so the place itself takes on sacred qualities. Hard-core fans buy Yankees Sod, the first officially licensed grass. Although it costs a few thousand dollars to fill out a good-sized lawn, proud fans can boast of

turf that grows from the same seeds the groundskeepers use at the stadium, and the sod comes with a certificate of authenticity from Major League Baseball and a counterfeit-proof hologram that declares it the official grass of the New York Yankees.[86]

Still other places start out as profane, but we endow them with sacred qualities. Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, where movie stars leave their footprints in concrete for posterity, is one such place. Theme parks are a form of mass-produced fantasy that take on aspects of sacredness. In particular, Disney World and Disneyland (and their outposts in Europe, Japan, and China) are destinations for "pilgrimages" by consumers around the globe. Disney World displays many characteristics of more traditional sacred places. Some even believe it has healing powers, which helps to explain why a trip to the park is the most common "last wish" for terminally ill children.[87]

As the saying goes, "Home is where the heart is."[88] In many cultures, the home is a particularly sacred place. It's a barrier between the harsh, external world and consumers' "inner space." Americans spend more than $50 billion a year on interior decorators and home furnishings, and our home is a central part of our identity. People all over the world go to great lengths to create a feeling of "homeyness." They personalize their dwellings with door wreaths, mantel arrangements, and a "memory wall" for family photos.[89] Even public places such as Starbucks cafés strive for a homelike atmosphere to shelter customers from the harshness of the outside world.

Sacred People

Two friends in San Francisco maintain Tumblr and Instagram sites, *#WWYW or What Would Yeezus Wear*, devoted to their idols, the glam couple Kim Kardashian and Kanye West. They post *paparazzi* photos of the celebs' outfits, then add photos of themselves wearing the same things. Hundreds of fan clubs like Always Elvis memorialize the King. Katy Perry has more than 108 million "Katy Cat" followers on Twitter.[90]

We idolize sacred people as we set them apart from the masses, and sometimes people come to believe that these individuals have "superhuman" abilities. Souvenirs, memorabilia, and even mundane items these celebrities have touched acquire special meanings (the celebrities "contaminate" the items). Newspapers pay *paparazzi* hundreds of thousands of dollars for candid shots of stars or royalty. Indeed, many businesses thrive on our desire for products we associate with the famous. There is a flourishing market for celebrity autographs, and objects that celebrities owned, such as Princess Diana's gowns or John Lennon's guitars, sell on eBay for astronomical prices.

Sacred Events

Sometimes public events resemble sacred, religious ceremonies. Think about fans who hold their hands over their hearts and solemnly recite the "Pledge of Allegiance" before a ball game, or how others reverently light matches (or hold up illuminated cell phones) during a rock concert.[91]

The world of sports is sacred to many of us (recent doping and gambling scandals aside). We find the roots of modern sports events in ancient religious rites, such as fertility festivals (e.g., the original Olympics).[92] And it's not uncommon for teams to join in prayer prior to a game. The sports pages are like the scriptures (and we all know ardent fans who read them "religiously"), the stadium is a house of worship, and the fans are members of the congregation. Devotees engage in group activities, such as tailgate parties and the "Wave," where sections of the stadium take turns standing up. The athletes and coaches that fans come to see are godlike; devotees believe they have almost superhuman powers. One study documented more than 600 children whose parents named them after the legendary University of Alabama coach Paul "Bear" Bryant![93]

Athletes are central figures in a common cultural myth known as the *hero tale*. In these stories, the player must prove himself under strenuous circumstances, and he

achieves victory only through sheer force of will. On a more mundane level, devotees consume certain ritual artifacts during these ceremonies (such as hot dogs at the ballpark). Sales of snack foods and beverages spike around the time of the Super Bowl; people spend $10 million more on tortilla chips than during a normal two-week period and more than $15 million extra on beer in the weeks surrounding the big game.[94]

Tourism is another category of sacred experience. People occupy sacred time and space when they travel on vacation (though you may not think so if you get stuck sleeping on an airport floor because of a plane delay). Tourists search for "authentic" experiences that differ from their normal world (think of Club Med's motto, "The antidote to civilization").[95] This traveling experience involves binary oppositions between work and leisure and being "at home" versus "away." Often, we relax everyday (profane) norms regarding appropriate behavior as tourists, and participate in illicit or adventurous experiences we would never engage in at home ("What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas").

The desire of travelers to capture these sacred experiences in objects forms the bedrock of the souvenir industry, which really sells sacred memories. Whether it's a personalized matchbook from a wedding or New York City salt-and-pepper shakers, a souvenir represents a tangible piece of the consumer's sacred experience.[96] In addition to personal mementos, such as ticket stubs you save from a favorite concert, these are some other sacred souvenir icons:[97]

- Local products (e.g., wine from California)
- Pictorial images (e.g., postcards)
- "Piece of the rock" (e.g., seashells, pine cones)
- Symbolic shorthand in the form of literal representations of the site (e.g., a miniature Statue of Liberty)
- Markers (e.g., Hard Rock Cafe T-shirts)

From Sacred to Profane, and Back Again

Just to make life interesting, some consumer activities move back and forth between the sacred and profane spheres over time.[98] A study of tea preparation in Turkey illustrates this movement. Although we are more likely to think of thick Turkish coffee, in reality Turks consume more tea *per capita* than any other country. In Turkish culture people drink tea continuously, like (or instead of) water. Tea is an integral part of daily life; many households and offices boil water for tea in the traditional *çaydanlik* (double teapot) first thing in the morning, and keep it steaming all day so that the beverage is ready at any time. The tea drinking process links to many symbolic meanings—including the traditional glasses, clear to appreciate the tea's color, and hourglass-shaped like a woman's body—and rituals, such as blending one's own tea, knowing how finely to grind the tea leaves, and how long to steep the tea for optimal flavor. When Lipton introduced the modern tea bag in 1984, Turkey was intent on modernization and soon consumers snapped up electric *çaydanliks* and mugs instead of small, shapely tea glasses. Tea became a symbol of the quick and convenient, and the drinking act became more of a fashion statement. Now, many Turkish consumers opt to return to the sacred, traditional rituals as a way to preserve authenticity in the face of rapid societal changes.[99]

The transition of Turkish tea to a mass-market product illustrates the process of **desacralization**. This occurs when we remove a sacred item or symbol from its special place or duplicate it in mass quantities so that it loses its "specialness" and becomes profane. Souvenir reproductions of sacred monuments such as the Washington Monument or the Eiffel Tower, artworks such as the *Mona Lisa* or Michelangelo's



A souvenir commemorates a consumer's sacred experience.
Source: glowonconcept/Fotolia

David, or reproductions of sacred symbols such as the U.S. flag on T-shirts eliminate their special aspects. They become inauthentic commodities with relatively little value.

Religion itself has to some extent become desacralized. Religious symbols like stylized crosses or New Age crystals often pop up on fashion jewelry.[100] Critics often charge that Christmas has turned into a secular, materialistic occasion devoid of its original sacred significance. A similar process occurs in relatively Westernized parts of the Islamic Middle East, where the holy month of Ramadan (that people traditionally observe by fasting and praying) is starting to look like Christmas: People buy lights in the shape of an Islamic crescent moon, send Ramadan cards to one another, and attend lavish fast-breaking feasts at hotels.[101]

OBJECTIVE 14-4
New products, services, and ideas spread through a population over time. Different types of people are more or less likely to adopt them during this diffusion process.

The Diffusion of Innovations

The originators of skateboarding in 1970s southern California (who were portrayed in the popular documentary *Dogtown and Z-Boys*) wouldn't recognize the sport today. At that time, boarders were outlaws; as one of the main characters in the film says, "We get the beat-down from all over. Everywhere we go, man, people hate us."

Now skateboarding is about as countercultural as *The Simpsons*. More kids ride skateboards than play basketball, and many of them snap up pricey T-shirts, skate shoes, helmets, and other accessories. In fact, boarders spend almost six times as much on "soft goods," such as T-shirts, shorts, and sunglasses (about $4.4 billion in a year), than on hard-core equipment, including the boards themselves. To real aficionados, skateboarding has simply become a way for big companies like Nike to sell its SB Dunks and Janoski shoes.[102]

The progression of skateboarding from a cult-like activity with rebellious undertones to a mainstream sport mirrors the journey many products and services take through popular culture. **Diffusion of innovations** refers to the process whereby a new product, service, or idea spreads through a population. An **innovation** is any product or service that consumers perceive to be new. It may take the form of an activity (skateboarding), a clothing style (pink "pussyhats"), a new manufacturing technique (the ability to design your own running shoe at nike.com), a new variation on an existing product (Parkay Fun Squeeze Colored Margarine in electric blue and shocking pink), a new way to deliver a product (Uber Eats), or a new way to package a current product (Campbell's Soup in Hand Microwaveable Soup that comes in a travel mug).

The social media explosion takes the diffusion process to a whole different level. As we've seen, the media democratization we witness today means that there are fundamental disruptions in the way consumers become aware of new products and the rate at which these innovations reach their markets through the process of diffusion.

If an innovation is successful (most are not!), it spreads through the population. First only a trickle of people decides to try it. Then, more and more consumers decide to adopt it, until sometimes it seems that almost everyone is buying it—if it's a "hit." The rate at which a product diffuses varies. For example, within 10 years after introduction, 40 percent of U.S. households watched cable TV, 35 percent listened to compact discs, 25 percent used answering machines, and 20 percent bought color TVs. It took radio 30 years to reach 60 million users and TV 15 years to reach this number. In contrast, within 3 years 90 million of us surfed the web.[103]

How Do We Decide to Adopt an Innovation?

Our adoption of an innovation resembles the decision-making sequence we discussed in Chapter 9. We move through the stages of awareness, information search, evaluation, trial, and adoption. The relative importance of each stage differs, however, depending on how much we already know about an innovation as well as on cultural factors that affect our willingness to try new things.[104]

As Figure 14.3 shows, roughly one-sixth of the population (innovators and early adopters) are quick to adopt new products, and one-sixth (**laggards**) are slow. The other two-thirds, so-called **late adopters** are somewhere in the middle. These consumers are the mainstream public. They are interested in new things, but they do not want them to be *too* new. In some cases, people deliberately wait to adopt an innovation because they assume that the company will improve its technology or that its price will fall after it has been on the market awhile (have you been holding off on that iPhone purchase to see what Apple will come up with next?).[105] Keep in mind that the proportion of consumers who fall into each category is an estimate; the actual size of each depends on such factors as the complexity of the product, its cost, and how much risk people associate with it.

Even though **innovators** represent only about 2.5 percent of the population, marketers are eager to identify them. These are the brave souls who are always on the lookout for novel products or services and who are first to try something new. An innovator tends to be a risk-taker. He or she also is likely to have a relatively high educational and income level and to be socially active. In some cases an innovator is an admired celebrity to whom others look for leadership. Luxury brands understand this, and they often work hard to "seed adoptions" by providing their exclusive items to high-profile people. This is the strategy Apple followed when the company launched its Apple Watch. Rather than making the new item widely available as it does with iPhones, Apple at first restricted access to celebrities including Pharrell Williams, Katy Perry, Drake, and Beyoncé. As Apple hoped, the celebs in turn posted Instagram photos of themselves sporting their new toys that stoked the fires of desire for the rest of us.[106]

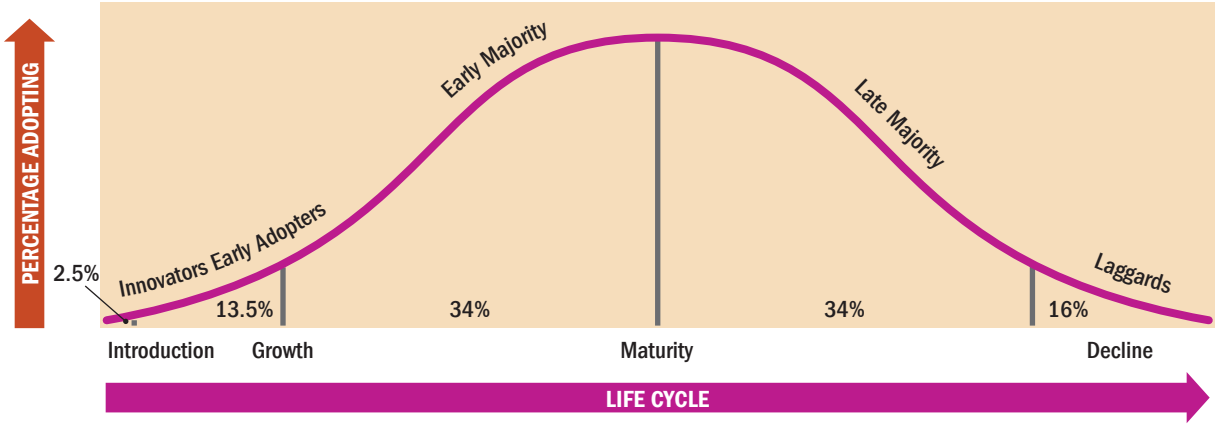


Figure 14.3 TYPES OF ADOPTERS

Early adopters share many of the same characteristics as innovators. An important difference is their high degree of concern for social acceptance, especially with regard to expressive products such as clothing and cosmetics. Generally speaking, an early adopter is receptive to new styles because he or she is involved in the product category and he or she values being in fashion.

What appears on the surface to be a fairly high-risk adoption (e.g., wearing a skirt three inches above the knee when most people wear them below the knee) is actually not *that* risky. Innovators who truly took the fashion risk have already "field-tested" the style change. We're likely to find early adopters in "fashion-forward" stores that feature the latest "hot" designer brands. In contrast, we're more likely to find true innovators in small boutiques that carry merchandise from as-yet-unknown designers.

Behavioral Demands of Innovations

We categorize innovations by the degree to which they demand adopters to change their behavior. One widely used approach to predicting whether people will adopt a new form of technology or information system is the **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)**. The TAM suggests that the likelihood of change is based on two factors: The perceived usefulness of the new option and its perceived ease of use. This model is based the theory of reasoned action we discussed in Chapter 8; it stresses that because there may be other constraints at work such as access to resources or the expectations of our peers, we can't necessarily predict if an innovation will be successful just because consumers have a positive or negative attitude toward it. We also have to consider whether they believe it will provide *utility* for them (e.g., if they believe that by using the new item this will enhance their performance in some way). The TAM model has been used to understand, for example, whether consumers will use e-commerce platforms depending on how useful they perceive them to be relative to traditional purchase strategies.[107]

The **Gartner Hype Cycle** (Figure 14.4), developed by a research firm by the same name, also is a widely used approach to help analysts chart the progress of a technological innovation. Its purpose is to tease apart the "hype" from the real commercial promise of a new product or platform such as gamification or virtual reality. This model describes five key phases of a technology's life cycle:

- **Innovation Trigger:** A potential technology breakthrough kicks things off. Early proof-of-concept stories and media interest trigger significant publicity. Often no usable products exist and commercial viability is unproven.

- **Peak of Inflated Expectations:** Early publicity produces a number of success stories—often accompanied by scores of failures. Some companies take action; many do not.
- **Trough of Disillusionment:** Interest wanes as experiments and implementations fail to deliver. Producers of the technology shake out or fail. Investments continue only if the surviving providers improve their products to the satisfaction of early adopters.
- **Slope of Enlightenment:** More instances of how the technology can benefit the enterprise start to crystallize and become more widely understood. Second- and third-generation products appear from technology providers. More enterprises fund pilots; conservative companies remain cautious.
- **Plateau of Productivity:** Mainstream adoption starts to take off. Criteria for assessing provider viability are more clearly defined. The technology's broad market applicability and relevance are clearly paying off.

Researchers identify three major types of innovations, although these three categories are not absolutes. They refer, in a relative sense, to the amount of disruption or change they bring to people's lives.

1 A **continuous innovation** is a modification of an existing product, such as when General Mills introduces a Honey Nut version of Cheerios or Levi's promotes shrink-to-fit jeans. The company makes small changes to position the product, add line extensions, or merely alleviate consumer boredom. Most product innovations are of this type; they are *evolutionary* rather than *revolutionary*. When a consumer adopts this kind of new product, he or she? only has to make minor changes in his or her? habits. A typewriter company, for example, many years ago modified its product to make it more "user friendly" to secretaries. Its engineers made the tops of the keys concave because women told them it was hard to type with long fingernails on a flat surface. This change endures today on our computer keyboards.

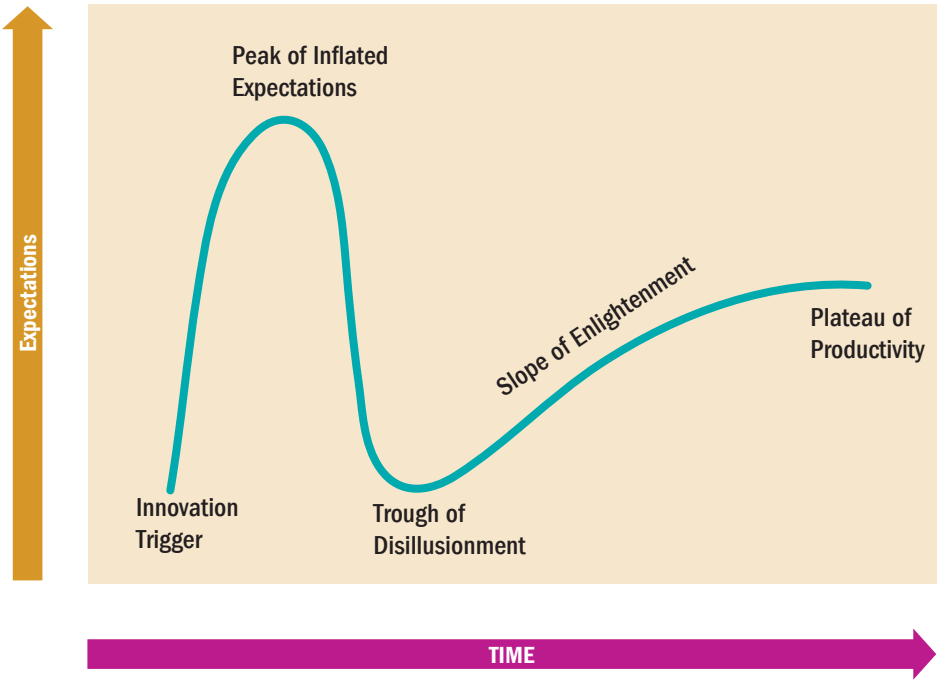


Figure 14.4 GARTNER HYPE CYCLE
Source: Gartner Hype Cycle-Interpreting Technology Hype by Gartner Inc.

2 Some innovations present us with a new way to use an existing product. This may be more effective, but we still have to alter our habits to use it. A Japanese clothing company introduced a line of Shower Clean business suits that allow traveling executives to bypass the dry cleaner; they wash their suits in a warm shower and need not press or iron them.[108] A **dynamically continuous innovation** is a significant change to an existing product. When IBM introduced its Selectric typewriter that used a typing ball rather than individual keys, the new design permitted secretaries to instantly change the typeface of manuscripts as they replaced one Selectric ball with another.

3 A **discontinuous innovation** creates really *big* changes in the way we live. Major inventions, such as the airplane, the car, the computer, and the television, radically changed modern lifestyles. The personal computer replaced the typewriter; it also allows some of us to "telecommute" from our homes. Of course, the cycle continues, as new continuous innovations such as mobile apps and cloud software transform how we access data and connect to others online.

Net Profit

M-Pesa (M for mobile, *pesa* is Swahili for money) is a mobile-phone-based money transfer service that is popular in parts of Africa, where most consumers do not have access to bank branches. As many other people around the world start to transact more of their banking business online, M-PESA provides valuable lessons on how to design an app that transforms how we relate to our financial institutions. This service is an example of **reverse innovation** (or trickle-up innovation). This term refers to the process whereby a product is initially to meet the needs of developing nations and then is adapted elsewhere. Battery-operated medical instruments first designed for use in countries with limited infrastructure are another example.

What Determines If an Innovation Will Diffuse?

Regardless of how much we have to change what we do, a successful innovation should possess these attributes:[109]

- **Compatibility**—The innovation should be compatible with consumers' lifestyles. A manufacturer of personal care products tried unsuccessfully several years ago to introduce a cream hair remover for men as a substitute for razors and shaving cream. This formulation was similar to what many women use to remove hair from their legs. Although the product was simple and convenient to use, it failed because men were not interested in a product they perceived to be too feminine and thus a threat to their masculine self-concepts.
- **Trialability**—Because we think an unknown product is risky, we're more likely to adopt an innovation if we can experiment with it before making a commitment. To reduce this risk, companies may spend a lot of money to distribute free "trial-size" samples of new products.
- **Complexity**—The product should be low in complexity. All things being equal, we will choose a product that's easier to understand and use rather than a more complex one. This strategy requires less effort from us and it also lowers our perceived risk. Manufacturers of DVD recorders, for example, put a lot of effort into simplifying usage (e.g., on-screen programming) to encourage non-techies to adopt them.
- **Observability**—Innovations that are readily apparent are more likely to spread because we can learn about them more easily. The rapid proliferation of fanny packs (pouches people wear around the waist in lieu of wallets or purses) was a result of their high visibility. It was easy for others to see the convenience this alternative offered (even if they were a bit nerdy).
- **Relative advantage**—Most importantly, the product should offer relative advantage over alternatives. The consumer must believe that it will provide a benefit other products cannot offer. For example, the Bugchaser is a wristband that contains insect repellent. Mothers with young children like it because it's nontoxic and doesn't stain—these are clear advantages over alternatives. In contrast, the Crazy Blue Air Freshener, which emits a fragrance when you turn on your car wipers, fizzled: People didn't see the need for the product and felt there were simpler ways to freshen the air in their cars.

OBJECTIVE 14-5
Many people and organizations play a role in the fashion system that creates and communicates symbolic meanings to consumers.

The Fashion System

Style is important to many of us, even when the style is to *not* be in style. That was the case in recent years as a fashion movement known as **Normcore** started to take off. This term describes a trend among young urbanites to forsake hipster styles like skinny jeans, wallet chains, and flannel shirts, for bland, suburban attire like Gap cargo shorts, a Coors Light T-shirt, a Nike golf hat, white sneakers, and "dad jeans." More broadly, some analysts stated that normcore reflected an effort by young Bohemian types to "get over themselves." They devoted tremendous effort to set themselves apart from others with quirky style flourishes like handlebar moustaches and drinking obscure microbrews, and so they felt a need to throw themselves back into mainstream culture. The normcore buzz grew quickly, to the point where a Google search of the term yields almost 1 million hits. Fashion insiders couldn't take it anymore; one person created the Google Chrome extension No More #NORMCORE, which blocks references to the term.[110] Time to move on to the next trend.

The **fashion system** includes all the people and organizations that create symbolic meanings and transfer those meanings to cultural goods. Although we often equate fashion with clothing, it's important to keep in mind that fashion processes affect *all* types of cultural phenomena, including music, art, architecture, and even science (i.e., certain research topics and individual scientists are "hot" at any point in time). Even business practices are subject to the fashion process; they evolve and



The fashon system influences many product categories in addition to apparel, such as food.
Source: Courtesy M&C Saatchi, Tel Aviv. Advertising Agency: M&C SAATCHI Tel-Aviv. Photographer: Miri Davidovitz. Client: Roladin Bakeries.

change depending on which management techniques are in vogue, such as total quality management (TQM), just-in-time inventory control (JIT), or managing by walking around (MBWA). The *movement of meaning* we discussed earlier in this chapter affects all of these domains.

At the outset, let's distinguish among some confusing terms. **Fashion** is the process of social diffusion by which some group(s) of consumers adopts a new style. In contrast, *a fashion* (or style) is a particular combination of attributes (say, stovepipe jeans that women wear with a tunic top). To be *in fashion* means that some reference group positively evaluates this combination (i.e., *Vogue* endorses this look as "in" for this season). Thus, the term *Danish Modern* refers to particular characteristics of furniture design (i.e., a fashion in interior design); it does not necessarily imply that Danish Modern is a fashion that consumers currently desire.[111]

Behavioral Science Perspectives on Fashion

Fashion is a complex process that operates on many levels. At one extreme, it's a societal phenomenon that affects many of us simultaneously. At the other, it exerts a personal effect on individual behavior. Many of us desire to be in fashion, and this motivates us as to what we buy. Fashion products also are aesthetic objects that reflect a culture's artistic traditions and history. For this reason, there are many perspectives on the origin and diffusion of fashion. Let's summarize some major approaches.[112]

Psychological Models of Fashion

Many psychological factors help explain what motivates us to be fashionable. These include conformity, desires for variety seeking, the need to express personal creativity, and sexual attraction. For example, many consumers seem to have a "need for uniqueness": They want to be different (though not necessarily *too* different!).[113] As a result, people may conform to the basic outlines of a fashion, but still improvise to make a personal statement within these general guidelines.

One of the earliest theories of fashion argued that "shifting **erogenous zones** (sexually arousing areas of the body) accounted for fashion changes and that different zones become the object of interest because they reflect societal trends.



The Normcore style reflected the fashion of not being in fashion.
Source: Eugenio Marongiu/Shutterstock.

J. C. Flugel, a disciple of Freud, proposed in the 1920s that sexually charged areas wax and wane as we grow bored with them; clothing styles change to highlight or hide the parts that currently are the focus of attention. For example, it was common for Renaissance-era women to drape their abdomens in fabrics to give a swollen appearance; successful childbearing was a priority in the disease-ridden 14th and 15th centuries. Now, some suggest that the current prevalence of the exposed midriff in women's fashion reflects the premium our society places on fitness.[114]

Economic Models of Fashion

Economists approach fashion in terms of the model of supply and demand. Items in limited supply have high value, whereas our desire decreases for readily available products. Rare items command respect and prestige. As we discussed in Chapter 12, the writer Thorstein Veblen argued that the wealthy practice *conspicuous consumption* to display their prosperity. As we also noted, this approach is somewhat outdated; upscale consumers today engage in *parody display* where they deliberately buy inexpensive products (especially during a recession). Other factors also influence the demand curve for fashion-related products. These include a **prestige–exclusivity effect** where high prices still create high demand, and a **snob effect** whereby lower prices actually reduce demand ("If it's that cheap, it can't be any good").[115]

Sociological Models of Fashion

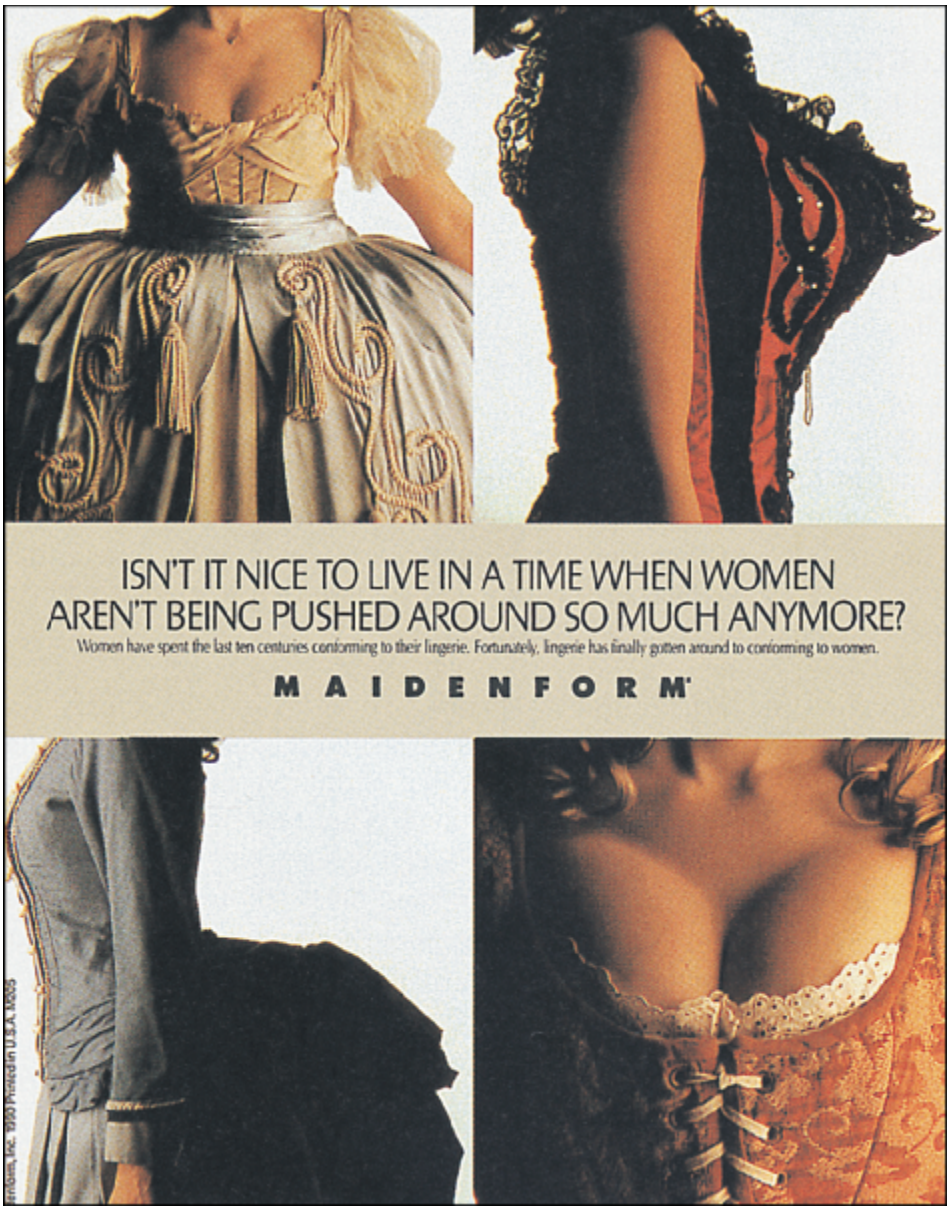
This perspective focuses on a subculture's adoption of a fashion (idea, style, and so on) and its subsequent diffusion into society as a whole. To understand this process, think about the integration of Goth culture into the mainstream. This fashion started as an expression of rebellion by young outcasts who admired 19th-century romantics. Goths defied conventional styles with their black clothing (often including over-the-top fashion statements such as Count Dracula capes, fishnet stockings, studded collars, and black lipstick) and punk music from bands such as Siouxsie & the Banshees and Bauhaus. Today, music stores sell vampire-girl lunchboxes, and mall outlets sell tons of clunky cross jewelry and black lace. You can find a T-shirt that looks like a corset at Kmart. At the Hot Topic website, teen surfers can buy a "multi-ring choker." Hard-core Goths are not amused, but hey, that's fashion for you.[116]

Trickle-down theory, which the sociologist Georg Simmel first proposed in 1904, is one of the most influential sociological perspectives on fashion. It states that two conflicting forces drive fashion change. First, subordinate groups adopt the status symbols of the groups above them as they attempt to climb up the ladder of social mobility. Dominant styles thus originate with the upper classes and *trickle down* to those below.

Now the second force kicks in: Those people in the superordinate groups keep a wary eye on the ladder below them to be sure followers don't imitate them. When lower-class consumers mimic their actions, they adopt new fashions to distance themselves from the mainstream. These two processes create a self-perpetuating cycle of change—the machine that drives fashion.[117]

The integration of hip-hop phrases into our vocabulary illustrates how people who set fashions resist mainstream adoption by the broader society. The street elite shunned some slang terms, such as *bad, fresh*, and *jiggy,* once they became too mainstream. The rap community even held a funeral (with a eulogy by Reverend Al Sharpton) for the word *def* once the *Oxford English Dictionary* included it in its new edition.[118]

Trickle-down theory applies to a society with a stable class structure that allows us to easily identify lower- versus upper-class consumers. This task is no longer so



This ad for Maidenform illustrates that fashions have accentuated different parts of the female anatomy throughout history.
Source: Courtesy of Hanesbrands Inc.

easy. In contemporary Western society, we have to modify this theory to account for new developments in mass culture:[119]

- A perspective we base on class structure can't account for the wide range of styles now available. We have many more choices today because of technological advances that let manufacturers drastically speed up production times and real-time media that keep us informed of style changes in minutes. Stores such as Zara and H&M can replenish their inventories in weeks rather than months. Suburban tweens watch MTV, chat on Facebook, or browse the virtual world Stardoll.com to stay on top of the latest trends; *mass fashion* thus replaces elite fashion because our media allow many market segments to learn about a style simultaneously.
- Consumers today are more influenced by opinion leaders who are similar to them, even if these innovators don't live in the same town or even country. As a result, each social group has its own fashion innovators who determine fashion

trends. It's more accurate to speak of a **trickle-across effect** where fashions diffuse horizontally among members of the same social group.[120]

- Finally, current fashions often originate with the lower classes and we observe a **trickle-up effect**. Grassroots innovators typically are people who lack prestige in the dominant culture (e.g., urban youth). Because they are less concerned with maintaining the status quo, they are free to innovate and take risks.[121]

The sociological perspective that emphasizes the tension between dominant and subordinate groups highlights a basic **paradox of fashion**. A brand often has cachet *because* only a select group of people own it; either because it is expensive or perhaps because only people "in the know" select it. As more consumers outside of this inner circle start to adopt it, it is no longer exclusive and its original meaning is lost. Therefore, *the item is a victim of its own success*. Popular brands including Levi Strauss and Harley-Davidson continue to struggle with this problem as their core users abandon them precisely because they gain wider market acceptance. Some companies such as the luxury car brand Aston Martin even limit access to some of their models only to current customers.

One pair of researchers distinguishes between two types of non-core users, however: They describe **brand immigrants** who try to claim membership within the community of users, and **brand tourists** who buy the brand but who do not claim membership. They found that brand immigrants do potentially dilute the value of the brand for core users, but brand tourists do not. Instead they can actually enhance the value of the brand because their experimentation with it demonstrates that the brand has value, but this usage does not threaten the identities of the core users. So, can a prestige brand have its cake and eat it too? These findings suggest one strategy: Create a museum dedicated to the myth of the brand (as Louis Vuitton, Valentino, Gucci, and Nike have done) and allow tourists to look but not touch.[122]

A Medical Model of Fashion

For many years, the lowly Hush Puppy was a shoe for nerds. Suddenly—almost overnight—the shoe became a chic fashion statement even though its manufacturer did nothing to promote this image. Why did this style diffuse through the population so quickly? **Meme theory** explains this process with a medical metaphor. A *meme* is an idea or product that enters the consciousness of people over time—examples include tunes, styles like the Hush Puppy, or even catch-phrases: How recently have you said "Dilly Dilly?" and then thought of a Bud Light?[123]

In this view, memes spread among consumers in a geometric progression just as a virus starts off small and steadily infects increasing numbers of people until it becomes an epidemic. Memes "leap" from brain to brain via a process of imitation. The memes that survive tend to be distinctive and memorable, and the hardiest ones often combine aspects of prior memes. For example, the *Star Wars* movies evoke prior memes that relate to the legend of King Arthur, religion, heroic youth, and 1930s adventure serials. Indeed, George Lucas studied comparative religion and mythology as he prepared his first draft of the *Star Wars* saga, *The Story of Mace Windu*.[125]

The diffusion of many products in addition to Hush Puppies seems to follow the same basic path. A few people initially use the product, but change happens in a hurry when the process reaches the moment of critical mass—what one author calls the **tipping point**.[126] For example, Sharp introduced the first low-priced fax machine in 1984 and sold about 80,000 in that year. There was a slow climb in the number of users for the next three years. Then, suddenly, in 1987 enough people had

The Tangled Web

Memes travel fast, and when they make fun of a brand, they can hurt. Increasingly, disgruntled consumers are creating members to complain about bad experiences with companies. As one marketing executive put it, "The brand becomes a temporary punching bag for many, many people. People will pile on even if they haven't actually been aggrieved." When a Tesla electric car erupted in flames, memes showed up almost instantly. One depicted a young couple holding each other outside a burning Tesla car, with the caption "Keep warm on a cold night." Another meme ridiculed Samsung's Galaxy phones when they started to explode all over the place. It showed a bomb-defusing expert in full military gear getting ready to plug in his Samsung phone, with the caption "How to safely charge your Galaxy Note 7." But the company did what experts recommend: It confronted the problem directly. When it launched its updated (and presumably less combustible) model, Samsung posted a #DoWhatYouCant video that featured an ostrich that dreams of flying. The bird stumbles, but ultimately soars into the sky. It had more than 1.3 million views on YouTube in its first 24 hours.[124]

fax machines that it made sense for everyone to have one, and Sharp sold a million units. Cell phones followed a similar trajectory. Do you remember when you first heard about Instagram or Snapchat?

Cycles of Fashion Adoption

In the early 1980s, Cabbage Patch dolls were all the rage among U.S. children. Faced with a limited supply of the product, some retailers reported near-riots among adults as they tried desperately to buy the dolls for their children. A Milwaukee deejay jokingly announced that people should bring catcher's mitts to a local stadium because an airplane was going to fly overhead and drop 2,000 dolls. He told his listeners to hold up their American Express cards so their numbers could be photographed from the plane. More than two dozen anxious parents apparently didn't get the joke: They showed up in subzero weather, mitts in hand.[127]

The Cabbage Patch craze lasted for a couple of seasons before it eventually died out, and consumers moved on to other things, such as Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, which grossed more than $600 million in 1989. The Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers eventually replaced the Turtles, and Beanie Babies and Giga Pets in turn deposed them before the invasion of Pokémon, followed by Yu-Gi-Oh! cards, Webkinz, Transformers, Squinkies and Zoobles, Fingerlings, and on and on.[128]

Figure 14.5 illustrates that fashions begin slowly, but if they "make it," they diffuse rapidly through a market, peak, and then retreat into obscurity. We identify different classes of fashion when we look at the relative length of their **acceptance cycles**. Many fashions have a moderate cycle, taking several months or even years to work their way through the stages of acceptance and decline; others are extremely long-lived or short-lived.

A **classic** is a fashion with an extremely long acceptance cycle. It is in a sense "antifashion" because it guarantees stability and low risk to the purchaser for a long period of time. Keds sneakers, introduced in 1917, appeal to those who are turned off by the high-fashion, trendy appeal of Nike or Reebok. When researchers asked consumers in focus groups to imagine what kind of building Keds would be, a common response was a country house with a white picket fence. In other words, consumers see the shoes as a stable, classic product. In contrast, participants described Nikes as steel-and-glass skyscrapers to reflect that brand's more modern image.[129]

A theme park in Japan offers "amusement baths" to visitors, including a wine bath, a green-tea bath, a coffee bath, a sake bath, and even a ramen-noodle bath. When they don their bathing suits and jump into the ramen bath (which looks like a soup bowl), they frolic in pepper-flavored water that contains collagen and garlic extracts the Japanese believe will improve the skin. A man dressed as a chef dispenses noodle-shaped bath additives and soy sauce to everyone in the tub.[130] A **fad** is a short-lived fashion. Relatively few people adopt a fad product, but it can spread quickly. Adopters may all belong to a common subculture, and the fad "trickles across" members but rarely breaks out of that specific group.

The *streaking* fad hit college campuses in the mid-1970s because it was briefly popular for students to run nude through classrooms, cafeterias, dorms, and sports venues. Although the practice quickly spread across many campuses, it was primarily restricted to college settings. Streaking highlights several of a fad's "naked truths:"[131]

- The fad is nonutilitarian; it does not perform any meaningful function.
- The fad often spreads impulsively; people do not undergo stages of rational decision making before they join in.
- The fad diffuses rapidly, gains quick acceptance, and dies just as quickly.

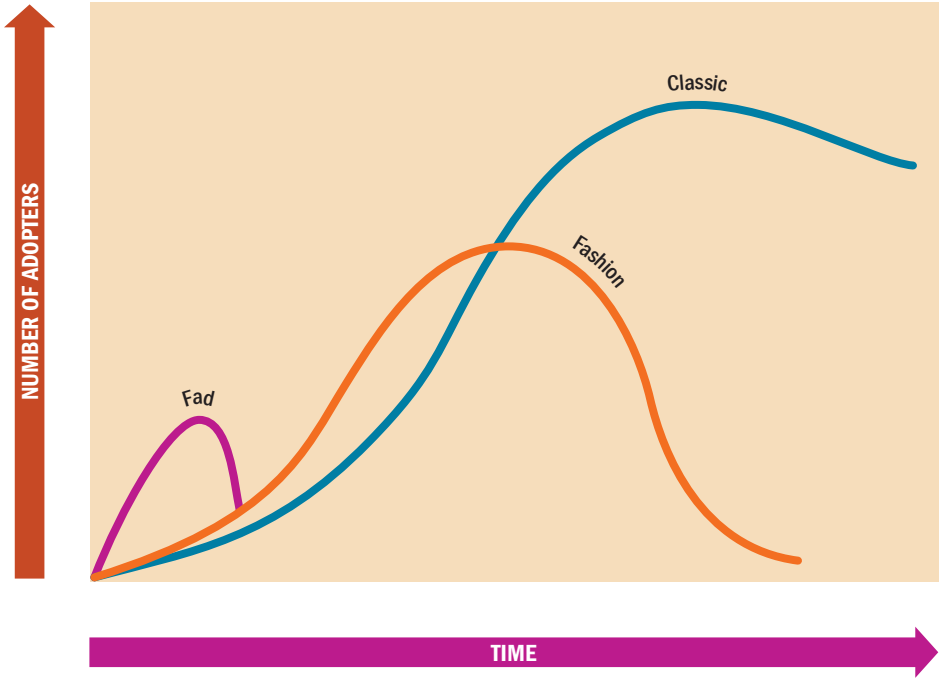


Figure 14.5 COMPARISON OF THE ACCEPTANCE CYCLES OF FADS, FASHIONS, AND CLASSICS

OBJECTIVE 14-6
Western (and particularly U.S.) culture has a huge impact around the world, although people in other countries don't necessarily ascribe the same meanings to products as we do.

Global Consumer Culture

As if understanding the dynamics of our own culture weren't hard enough, these issues get even more complicated when we consider what drives consumers in other cultures. The consequences of ignoring cultural sensitivities can be costly. Think about problems a prominent multinational company such as McDonald's encounters as it expands globally—even as today the iconic U.S. chain's worldwide operations are far bigger than its U.S. domestic business:[132]

- During the 1994 soccer World Cup, the fast-food giant reprinted the Saudi Arabian flag, which includes sacred words from the Koran, on disposable packaging it used in promotions. Muslims around the world protested this borrowing of sacred imagery, and the company had to scramble to correct its mistake.
- In 2002, McDonald's agreed to donate $10 million to Hindu and other groups as partial settlement of litigation involving its mislabeling of French fries and hash browns as vegetarian (it cooked them in oil tainted with meat residue).
- Also in 2002, the company abruptly cancelled its plans to introduce its new McAfrika sandwich in its Norwegian restaurants. The CEO of McDonald's in Norway acknowledged on national television that introducing this menu item at a time of growing famine in Africa was "coincidental and unfortunate."
- In India, the company doesn't sell any of its famous beef hamburgers. Instead, it offers customized entrées such as a Pizza McPuff, McAloo Tikki (a spiced-potato burger), Paneer Salsa McWrap, and even a Crispy Chinese burger, to capitalize on the great popularity of Chinese food in India. It makes its mayonnaise without eggs, and all stores maintain separate kitchen sections for vegetarian

and nonvegetarian dishes. Workers from the nonvegetarian section must shower before they cross over to the other area.

- In 2005, McDonald's introduced the spicy Prosperity Burger in nine countries, from South Korea to Indonesia, in recognition of the Lunar New Year.
- Although the Japanese are well-known for their healthy diets, McDonald's numerous customers there are clamoring for high-calorie sandwiches—even as the company's U.S. consumers welcome new diet-friendly entrées like the Premium Southwest salad. As part of its new Big America 2 campaign, McD's in Japan offer the 713-calorie Idaho burger (topped with melted cheese, a deep-fried hash brown, strips of bacon, onions, and pepper-and-mustard sauce) and several other U.S.-themed items.[133] It seems there's more than one way to translate "Big America."
- McDonald's introduced a new entrée to the German market: The McCurrywurst is a mix of pork bratwurst chunks in a spicy tomato sauce accompanied by shaker packs of either mild or sharp curry powder. This follows on the mini Nürnburger brat sandwich the chain introduced a few years ago. Germans love their bratwurst, so now they can eat it Golden Arches style.[134]
- Asian consumers think of McDonald's as less of an inexpensive meal on the run and more of a middle-class experience. People regard Western fast food chains as safe options: Food safety is a major concern, particularly in China because of a series of scandals involving contaminated products that resulted in deaths. McDonald's emphasized the quality of its ingredients with its Chickileaks campaign (the actual translation from the Chinese is "unveil the secret of chicken grown"), that focused on the integrity of the company's chicken supply chain.[135] Unfortunately, recent events show that these companies can't rest on their laurels: Sales at McDonald's as well as KFC slumped when in 2014 Chinese television uncovered yet another food safety problem; this time with a local supplier that was selling meat past its expiration date to both companies.[136]
- At the end of 2017, the company introduced the McVegan in its stores in Finland and Switzerland. Although a relatively small number of people in these countries follow a vegan diet today, McDonald's sees the writing on the wall as the interest in going meat-free rises globally.[137]

More than 60 countries have a gross national product of less than $10 billion. There are at least 135 transnational companies that post more revenue than that figure. Many multinational firms are household names, widely recognized by literally billions of people. The dominance of these marketing powerhouses creates a **global consumer culture** that unites people around the world by their common devotion to brand-name consumer goods, movie stars, celebrities, and leisure activities.[138] As developing countries generate millions of new middle-class consumers, people the world over value well-known brands that symbolize prosperity. Shopping evolves from a wearying, task-oriented struggle to locate even basic necessities to a leisure activity.

It's a BRAND-New World

Although Chinese consumers enjoy exotic beverages such as snake bile wine and fresh-squeezed cucumber juice, they still buy more than one billion bottles of good old U.S. Coca-Cola per year. The National Basketball Association sells $500 million of licensed merchandise every year *outside* of the United States; China is its largest foreign market.[139] Patrons of the Starlite Urban Drive-In in London sit in rows of cars as they watch U.S. "classics" like *Grease* and *Dirty Dancing* while they chow

down on burgers, meatloaf, and sweet potato pie, followed by ice cream sundaes or chocolate brownies and cream. In Japan followers of *yankii* fashion adapted retro-punk styles from American popular culture that we haven't seen since the 1980s.[140]

Walk the streets of Lisbon or Buenos Aires, and the sight of Nike hats, Gap T-shirts, and Levi's jeans will accost you at every turn. The allure of U.S. consumer culture spreads throughout the world, but with a lot of pushback in many places. Critics in other countries deplore the creeping Americanization of their cultures because of what they view as excessive materialism. One French critic summarized this resistance to the diffusion of U.S. culture: He described the Euro Disney theme park as "a horror made of cardboard, plastic, and appalling colors—a construction of hardened chewing gum and idiotic folklore taken straight out of a comic book written for obese Americans."[141]

Okay, let's pretend to ignore that criticism for now: For better or worse, the West (and especially the United States) is a net exporter of popular culture. Many consumers equate Western lifestyles in general and the English language in particular with modernization and sophistication, and numerous U.S. brands slowly but surely insinuate themselves into local cultures. Indeed, some global brands are so widespread that many are only vaguely aware of their countries of origin. In surveys, consumers routinely guess that Heineken is German (it's really Dutch) and that Nokia is Japanese (it's Finnish).[142]

As the global consumption ethic spreads, rituals and product preferences in different cultures become homogenized. For example, some urbanites in Muslim Turkey now celebrate Christmas even though gift-giving is not customary in many parts of the country—even on birthdays. In China, Christmas fever grips China's newly rising urban middle class as an excuse to shop, eat, and party. People there snap up Christmas trees, ornaments, and Christian religious objects (even though the street vendors who peddle images of Jesus and Mary can't always identify who they are). Chinese consumers embrace Christmas because to them the holiday is international and modern, not because it's a traditional Christian celebration. The government encourages this practice because it stimulates consumer spending. To make the holiday even merrier, China exports about $1 billion worth of Christmas products every year, and its factories churn out $7.5 billion of the toys people worldwide put under their trees.[143]

Does this homogenization mean that in time consumers who live in Nairobi, New Guinea, or the Netherlands will all be indistinguishable from those in New York or Nashville? Probably not, because the meaning of consumer goods mutates to blend with local customs and values. For example, in Turkey some urban women use their ovens to dry clothes and their dishwashers to wash muddy spinach. A person in Papua New Guinea may combine a traditional clothing style such as a *bilum* with Western items such as Mickey Mouse shirts or baseball caps.[144]

These processes make it unlikely that global homogenization will overwhelm local cultures, but it is likely that there will be multiple consumer cultures, each of which blends global icons such as Nike's pervasive "swoosh" with indigenous products and meanings. In Vietnam, for example, local fast-food chains dominate the market as they duplicate a McDonald's approach but add a local flavor. The country's hugely successful Kinh Do red and yellow outlets sell specialties like dried squid buns. In the Philippines, the Jollibee Foods Corp. burger chain also copies the McDonald's look—and it outsells McDonald's there.[145]

Creolization occurs when foreign influences integrate with local meanings. In India, beggars sell bottles of Coke from tricycles, and Indipop, a popular music hybrid, mixes traditional styles with rock, rap, and reggae.[146] Young Hispanic Americans bounce between hip-hop and *Rock en Español*, blend Mexican rice with spaghetti sauce, and spread peanut butter and jelly on tortillas.[147] In Argentina,

Coca-Cola launched Nativa, a soft drink flavored with the country's traditional *yerba mate* herbal tea, as part of a strategy to broaden its portfolio with products it makes from indigenous ingredients.[148]

Rather than ignore the global characteristics of their brands, firms have to manage them strategically. That's critical, because future growth for most companies will come from foreign markets. The United Nations estimates that for the next 30 years half of the world's population growth will be concentrated in just nine countries: India, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pakistan, Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States, Uganda, and Indonesia.[149] The U.S. contribution may drop depending upon whether we alter our policies regarding immigration.

As corporations compete in many markets around the world, the debate intensifies: Should an organization develop separate marketing plans for each culture, or should it craft a single plan to implement everywhere? Let's briefly consider each viewpoint.

Adopt a Standardized Strategy

As Procter & Gamble strategizes about the best way to speak to consumers around the world, the company finds large segments in many countries that share the same outlooks, style preferences, and aspirations. These include teenagers, working women who try to juggle careers and families, and baby boomers. As the head of P&G's Global Health and Feminine Care division explained, "We're seeing global tribes forming around the world that are more and more interconnected through technology. If you focus on the similarities instead of the differences [in these tribes], key business opportunities emerge." For example, brand managers find that teenage girls everywhere have the same concerns and questions about puberty, so the company makes the same content available in 40 countries.[150]

Proponents of a standardized marketing strategy argue that many cultures, especially those of industrialized countries, are now so homogenized that the same approach will work throughout the world. If it develops one approach for multiple markets, a company can benefit from economies of scale, because it does not have to incur the substantial time and expense to develop a separate strategy for each culture.[151] This viewpoint represents an **etic perspective**, which focuses on commonalities across cultures. An etic approach to a culture is objective and analytical; it reflects impressions of a culture as outsiders view it.

Adopt a Localized Strategy

Unlike Disney World in Orlando, visitors to the Walt Disney Studios theme park at Disneyland Paris don't hear the voices of U.S. movie stars narrating their guided tours. Instead, European actors such as Jeremy Irons, Isabella Rossellini, and Nastassja Kinski provide commentary in their native tongues.

Disney learned the hard way about the importance of being sensitive to local cultures after it opened its Euro Disney Park in 1992. The company got slammed because its new location didn't cater to local customs (such as serving wine with meals). Visitors to Euro Disney from many countries took offense, even at what seem to be small slights. For example, initially the park only sold a French sausage, which drew complaints from Germans, Italians, and others who believed their own local versions to be superior. Euro Disney's CEO explained, "When we first launched there was the belief that it was enough to be Disney. Now we realize that our guests need to be welcomed on the basis of their own culture and travel habits."[152]

Disney applied the lessons it learned in cultural sensitivity to its newer Hong Kong Disneyland. Executives shifted the angle of the front gate by 12 degrees after



A KFC restaurant in Japan started to offer turkey dinners on Christmas for expats who missed being home for the holiday. Over time, this practice spread and is now a holiday tradition for many Japanese consumers as well. *Source:* David Parker/Alamy Stock Photo.

they consulted a *feng shui* specialist, who said the change would ensure prosperity for the park. Disney also put a bend in the walkway from the train station to the gate to make sure the flow of positive energy, or *chi*, did not slip past the entrance and out to the China Sea. Cash registers are close to corners or along walls to increase prosperity. The company burned incense as it finished each building, and it picked a lucky day (September 12) for the opening. One of the park's main ballrooms measures 888 square meters, because eight is a lucky number in Chinese culture. And because the Chinese consider the number four bad luck, you won't find any fourth-floor buttons in hotel elevators.

Disney's experience supports the view of marketers who endorse an **emic perspective** that stresses variations across cultures. They feel that each culture is unique, with its own value system, conventions, and regulations. This perspective argues that each country has a **national character**, a distinctive set of behavior and personality characteristics.[153] A marketer must therefore tailor its strategy to the sensibilities of each specific culture. An emic approach to a culture is subjective and experiential: It attempts to explain a culture as insiders experience it.

Sometimes this strategy means that a manufacturer has to modify what it makes or a retailer has to change the way it displays the product so that it's acceptable to local tastes. When Walmart started to open stores abroad in the early 1990s, it offered a little piece of America to foreign consumers—and that was the problem. It promoted golf clubs in soccer-mad Brazil and pushed ice skates in Mexico. It trained its German clerks to smile at customers—who thought they were flirting. Now Walmart tries to adapt to local preferences. Its Chinese stores sell live turtles and snakes and lure shoppers who come on foot or bicycle with free shuttle buses and home delivery for refrigerators and other large items.[154]

In some cases, consumers in one place simply do not like some products that are popular elsewhere, or their different lifestyles require companies to rethink their designs. IKEA finally realized that Americans use a lot of ice in their drinks and so they didn't buy the smaller European glasses the stores stocked. The Swedish furniture chain also figured out that compared to Europeans, Americans sleep in bigger beds, need bigger bookshelves, and like to curl up on sofas rather than sit on them.[155]

Marketing Pitfall!

The language barrier is one obvious problem that marketers who wish to break into foreign markets must navigate. Travelers abroad commonly encounter signs in tortured English, such as a note to guests at a Tokyo hotel that proclaims, "You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid," a notice at a hotel in Acapulco reassuring people that "The manager has personally passed all the water served here," or a dry cleaner in Majorca who urges passing customers to "drop your pants here for best results." Local product names often raise eyebrows on visiting Americans who might stumble on a Japanese coffee creamer called Creap, a Mexican bread named Bimbo, or even a Scandinavian product to unfreeze car locks named Super Piss.

Listerine sells an alcohol-free version in Muslim countries where spirits are forbidden and a green tea–flavored mouthwash in Asia. Cheetos come in many flavors around the world that have little to do with cheese, including Seaweed (Taiwan), Avocado Salad (Japan), Ketchup (Canada), Masala Balls (India), and Strawberry Yogurt (Vietnam).[156]

One technique marketers use to avoid this problem is **back-translation** in which a different interpreter retranslates a translated ad back into its original language to catch errors. Here are some errors that could have used a bit of back-translation:[157]

- Audi calls its sporty electric car the etron. Unfortunately, to a French speaker the word *étron* hardly connotes motoring sophistication. Instead, it translates as "*excrement*."[158]
- Kraft Foods reorganized recently and renamed itself Mondelēz International. Monde is French for *world* in French, and *delez*, with a long E in the final syllable, is a play on *delish*. However, to Russians the word sounds like a term for oral sex.[159]
- The Scandinavian company that makes Electrolux vacuum cleaners sold them in the United States with this slogan: "Nothing sucks like an Electrolux."
- Fresca (a soft drink) is Mexican slang for lesbian.
- Ford discovered that a truck model it called Fiera means "ugly old woman" in Spanish. Its Caliente model is slang for a streetwalker. In Brazil, Pinto is a slang term for "small male appendage."
- When Rolls-Royce introduced its Silver Mist model in Germany, it found that the word *mist* translates as excrement. Similarly, Sunbeam's hair-curling iron, called the Mist-Stick, translates as manure wand. To add insult to injury, *Vicks* is German slang for sexual intercourse, so the company had to change its name to Wicks in that country.
- IKEA had to explain that the Gutvik children's bunk bed is named "for a tiny town in Sweden" after German shoppers noted that the name sounded a lot like a phrase that means "good f***." IKEA has yet to issue an explanation for its Fartfull workbench or its Jerker computer table.[160]

So, which perspective is correct, the emic or the etic? As you might guess, the best bet probably is a combination of both.[161] Some researchers argue that the relevant dimension to consider is **consumer style**: A pattern of behaviors, attitudes, and opinions that influences all of a person's consumption activities—including attitudes toward advertising, preferred channels of information and purchase, brand loyalty, and price consciousness. These researchers identified four major clusters of consumer styles when they looked at data from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany:[162]

- Price-sensitive consumers
- Variety seekers
- Brand-loyal consumers
- Information seekers

Given the sizable variations in tastes within the United States alone, it is hardly surprising that people around the world develop their own unique preferences. Panasonic touted the fact that its rice cooker kept food from getting too crisp—until the company learned that consumers in the Middle East *like* to eat their rice this way. Unlike Americans, Europeans favor dark chocolate over milk chocolate, which they think of as a children's food. Sara Lee sells its pound cake with chocolate chips in the United States, raisins in Australia, and coconut in Hong Kong. Crocodile handbags are popular in Asia and Europe but not in the United States.[163]

One of the most widely used measures of cross-cultural values is an instrument a Dutch researcher developed called **Hofstede Dimensions of National Culture**.[164] This measure scores a country in terms of its standing on six dimensions so that users can compare and contrast values:[165]

- **Power Distance**—The extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.
- **Individualism**—The degree to which individuals are integrated into groups.
- **Masculinity**—The distribution of roles between the genders.
- **Uncertainty Avoidance**—A society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity.
- **Long-Term Orientation**—Values associated with long-term orientation are thrift and perseverance; values associated with short-term orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and protecting one's "face."
- **Indulgence versus Restraint**—The extent to which a society allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. A culture high on restraint suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

These dimensions are useful to marketers that want to understand how members of specific cultures may respond quite differently even though they encounter the same situations or marketing messages. For example, researchers found that there is a lower level of prosocial behavior, such as donating to charities, in countries characterized by lower Power Distance. They argue that because people expect and accept greater levels of inequality among citizens, they don't feel as much responsibility to help others.[166]

An entirely different analysis argued that Spanish consumers score high on the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension, which motivates them to avoid new products compared to other Europeans. It underscores the importance of providing "uncertain" customers like these with a relatively familiar experience and then gently innovating on that, rather than trying to introduce entirely new products. In Spain it is now popular to drink what the locals call a "gintonic." Specialty bars serve imaginative variations of the traditional "gin and tonic" that use tonic flavors like kaffir lime and pink peppercorn and gin infused with fresh fruits and spices. Apparently Spaniards consider these new offerings "easy to taste" because they are used to bitter-tasting brands of sparkling water. As a successful restaurateur explains it, "It's almost like we're seeing baby steps. Like we're not ready to take everything at once, but, for now, we'll try a cupcake. And then we'll try a burger. And then we will try a grapefruit slice in a gin and tonic. You take these little bits that, for whatever reason, you are comfortable with, and they are your first steps towards becoming multicultural." Spanish consumers suddenly became the second-highest *per capita* consumers of gin worldwide (the British still hold the title).[167]

Does Global Marketing Work?

So, what's the verdict? Does global marketing work or not? Perhaps the more appropriate question is, "*When* does it work?" Although the argument for a homogenous world culture is appealing in principle, in practice it hasn't worked out too well. One reason is that consumers in different countries have varying conventions and customs, so they simply do not use products the same way. Kellogg, for example, discovered that in Brazil people don't typically eat a big breakfast; they're more likely to eat cereal as a dry snack.

Some large corporations, such as Coca-Cola, have successfully crafted a single, international image. Still, even the soft-drink giant must make minor modifications to the way it presents itself in each culture. Although Coke commercials are largely standardized, the company permits local agencies to edit them so they highlight close-ups of local faces.[168] Coke's successful Share a Coke campaign started in Australia, then expanded to more than 50 countries where cans and bottles are imprinted with the most popular names in each place.

To maximize the chances of success for these multicultural efforts, marketers must locate consumers in different countries who nonetheless share a common *worldview.* This is more likely to be the case among people whose frame of reference is relatively more international or cosmopolitan, or who receive much of their information about the world from sources that incorporate a worldwide perspective. Who is likely to fall into this category? Two consumer segments are particularly good candidates: (1) affluent people who are "global citizens" and who come into contact with ideas from around the world through their travels, business contacts, and media experiences; and (2) young people whose tastes in music and fashion are strongly influenced by YouTube and other media that broadcast many of the same images to multiple countries.[169]

A large-scale study of consumers in 41 countries identified the characteristics that people associate with global brands, and it also measured the relative importance of those dimensions when consumers buy products.[170] The researchers grouped consumers who evaluate global brands in the same way. They identified four major segments:

- **Global citizens**—The largest segment (55 percent of consumers) uses the global success of a company as a signal of quality and innovation. At the same time, they are concerned about whether companies behave responsibly on issues such as consumer health, the environment, and worker rights.
- **Global dreamers**—The second-largest segment, at 23 percent, consists of consumers who see global brands as quality products and readily buy into the myths they author. They aren't nearly as concerned with social responsibility as are the global citizens.
- **Antiglobals**—Thirteen percent of consumers are skeptical that transnational companies deliver higher-quality goods. They dislike brands that preach U.S. values, and they don't trust global companies to behave responsibly. They try to avoid doing business with transnational firms.
- **Global agnostics**—The remaining 9 percent of consumers don't base purchase decisions on a brand's global attributes. Instead, they evaluate a global product by the same criteria they use to judge local brands and don't regard its global nature as meriting special consideration.

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

Now that you have finished reading this chapter, you should understand why:

1. **A culture is a society's personality.**

   A society's culture includes its values, ethics, and the material objects its members produce. It is the accumulation of shared meanings and traditions among members of a society. We describe a culture in terms of ecology (the way people adapt to their habitat), its social structure, and its ideology (including moral and aesthetic principles). Social scientists distinguish between high (or elite) forms and low (or popular) forms of culture. Products of popular culture tend to follow a cultural formula and contain predictable components. However, these distinctions blur in modern society as marketers increasingly incorporate imagery from "high art" to sell everyday products.

2. **Myths are stories that express a culture's values, and in modern times marketing messages convey these values to members of the culture.**

   Myths are stories with symbolic elements that express the shared ideals of a culture. Many myths involve a binary opposition, defining values in terms of what they are and what they are not (e.g., nature versus technology). Advertising, movies, and other media transmit modern myths.

   A ritual is a set of multiple, symbolic behaviors that occur in a fixed sequence and that we repeat periodically. Ritual is related to many consumption activities that occur in popular culture. These include holiday observances, gift-giving, and grooming.

   A rite of passage is a special kind of ritual that marks the transition from one role to another. These passages typically entail the need to acquire ritual artifacts to facilitate the transition. Modern rites of passage include graduations, fraternity initiations, weddings, debutante balls, and funerals.

3. **We describe products as either sacred or profane, and it's not unusual for some products to move back and forth between the two categories.**

   We divide consumer activities into sacred and profane domains. Sacred phenomena are "set apart" from everyday activities or products. Sacralization occurs when we set apart everyday people, events, or objects from the ordinary. Objectification occurs when we ascribe sacred qualities to products or items that sacred people once owned. Desacralization occurs when formerly sacred objects or activities become part of the everyday, as when companies reproduce "one-of-a-kind" works of art in large quantities.

4. **New products, services, and ideas spread through a population over time. Different types of people are more or less likely to adopt them during this diffusion process.**

   Diffusion of innovation refers to the process whereby a new product, service, or idea spreads through a population. Innovators and early adopters are quick to adopt new products, and laggards are slow. A consumer's decision to adopt a new product depends on his or her personal characteristics as well as on characteristics of the innovation itself. We are more likely to adopt a new product if it demands relatively little behavioral change, is easy to understand, and provides a relative advantage compared to existing products.

5. **Many people and organizations play a role in the fashion system that creates and communicates symbolic meanings to consumers.**

   The fashion system includes everyone involved in creating and transferring symbolic meanings. Many different products express common cultural categories (e.g., gender distinctions). Many people tend to adopt a new style simultaneously in a process of collective selection. According to meme theory, ideas spread through a population in a geometric progression much as a virus infects many people until it reaches epidemic proportions. Other perspectives on motivations for adopting new styles include psychological, economic, and sociological models of fashion.

   The styles prevalent in a culture at any point in time reflect underlying political and social conditions. We term the set of agents responsible for creating stylistic alternatives a culture production system. Factors such as the types of people involved in this system and the amount of competition by alternative product forms influence the choices that eventually make their way to the marketplace for consideration by end consumers.

   Fashions follow cycles that resemble the product life cycle. We distinguish between two extremes of fashion adoption, classics and fads, in terms of the length of this cycle.

6. Western (and particularly U.S.) culture has a huge impact around the world, although people in other countries don't necessarily ascribe the same meanings to products as we do.

The United States is a net exporter of popular culture. Consumers around the world eagerly adopt U.S. products, especially entertainment vehicles and items they link to a U.S. lifestyle (e.g., Marlboro cigarettes, Levi's jeans). Despite the continuing "Americanization" of world culture, some people resist globalization because they fear it will dilute their own local cultures. In other cases, they exhibit creolization as they integrate these products with existing cultural practices.

Because a consumer's culture exerts such a big influence on his or her lifestyle choices, marketers must learn as much as possible about differences in cultural norms and preferences when they do business in more than one country. One important issue is the extent to which we need to tailor our marketing strategies to each culture. Followers of an etic perspective believe that people in many cultures appreciate the same universal messages. Believers in an emic perspective argue that individual cultures are too unique to permit such standardization; marketers must instead adapt their approaches to local values and practices. Attempts at global marketing have met with mixed success. In many cases this approach is more likely to work if the messages appeal to basic values or if the target markets consist of consumers who are internationally rather than locally oriented.

KEY TERMS

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REVIEW

14-1 What is *culture*? List three dimensions that social scientists use to describe a culture and give an example of each.

14-2 A myth is a special kind of story. What makes it special? What is an example of a modern myth?

14-3 Give an example of a marketer who uses the principle of binary opposition.

14-4 What is a *ritual*? Describe three kinds of rituals and provide an example of each.

14-5 List the three stages of a rite of passage ritual.

14-6 What is the difference between sacred and profane consumption? Provide one example of each.

14-7 How is a collection sacred? What is the difference between collecting and hoarding?

14-8 Describe a culture production system and list its three components.

14-9 Define a *cultural gatekeeper*, and give three examples.

14-10 Describe the difference between arts and crafts.

14-11 What is a *cultural formula*? Give an example.

14-12 Who are *innovators*? *Early adopters*? *Laggards*?

14-13 What are the differences among *fashion, a fashion*, and *in fashion*?

14-14 Summarize some of the major approaches we can use to understand fashion from the perspectives of psychologists, economists, and sociologists.

14-15 What is an example of a *meme*?

14-16 What is the trickle-down effect? List some reasons why this theory is no longer as valid as it used to be.

14-17 What is the difference between a *fad*, a *fashion*, and a *classic fashion* life cycle?

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

▶ DISCUSS

14-18 "Disney World is a sacred place." Do you agree? Why or why not?

14-19 Describe the three stages of the rite of passage associated with graduating from college.

14-20 Have you ever given yourself a gift? If so, why did you do it and how did you decide what to get?

14-21 Identify modern-day myths that corporations create. How do they communicate these stories to consumers?

14-22 In the last few years our culture has been shocked by revelations regarding sexual harassment by famous artists, actors, executives, and others as the #MeToo movement accelerated. Prominent companies including Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz, Hugo Boss, Bayer, IBM, and Kodak had ties to Nazi Germany. Aetna and New York Life profited by selling insurance policies to slaveowners.[171] Yet we value their products today. To what extent can or should we separate the creator from the creation? Should we buy products or services that are "tainted" by their owners' or companies' unsavory past actions?

14-23 "Christmas has become simply another opportunity to exchange gifts and stimulate the economy." Do you agree? Why or why not?

14-24 Bridal registries specify clearly the gifts that the couple wants. How do you feel about this practice? Should people actually specify what you should buy for them, or should a gift be a more personal expression from you?

14-25 Rituals provide us with a sense of order and security. In a study of the drinking rituals of college students, the researchers found that drinking imposed order in students' daily lives—from the completion of assignments to what and when to eat. In addition, ritualizing an activity such as drinking provides security and fellowship at a time fraught with confusion and turbulent change. Obviously, though, there's a dark side to drinking rituals. Consider the highly publicized death of an MIT student who died three days after he fell into an alcohol-induced coma as the result of a fraternity pledge. Indeed, although binge drinking is a ritual many college students practice, critics have described it as the most significant

health hazard on college campuses today.[172] What role does drinking play in the social life on your campus? Based on your experience, how does it fit into rituals of college life? Should these practices be changed? If so, how?

14-26 Movie companies often conduct market research when they produce big-budget films. If necessary, they will reshoot part of a movie when viewers say they don't like it. Some people oppose this practice: They claim that movies, like books, songs, plays, and other artistic endeavors, should not conform to what the market wants, lest they sacrifice their integrity. What do you think?

14-27 Boots with six-inch heels were a fashion rage among young Japanese women a few years ago. Several teens died after they tripped over their shoes and fractured their skulls. However, followers of the style claimed they were willing to risk twisted ankles, broken bones, bruised faces, and other dangers the platform shoes caused. One teenager said, "I've fallen and twisted my ankle many times, but they are so cute that I won't give them up until they go out of fashion."[173] Many consumers around the world seem willing to suffer for the sake of fashion. Others argue that we are merely pawns in the hands of designers, who conspire to force unwieldy fashions down our throats. What do you think? What is and what should be the role of fashion in our society? How important is it for people to be in style? What are the pros and cons of keeping up with the latest fashions? Do you believe that we are at the mercy of designers?

▶ APPLY

14-28 People in Thailand are preoccupied with supernatural forces. One common sight is a "spirit house," a miniature dwelling intended for protective ghosts. Some include electric wiring and indoor lighting; you will even find them in 7-Eleven convenience stores throughout the country. Thais spend about $63 million per year on visits to fortune tellers. Stores sell amulets for good luck next to breath mints, and horoscope books next to junk food. There are YouTube channels devoted to fortune telling and computer programs like "Feng Shui Master," which supposedly help to predict the future of gold prices.[174]

How do consumers in the United States compare? Interview people you know about any "magic" items they own (e.g., how many of your friends have a lucky charm or hang a St. Christopher medal or some other object from their rearview mirrors?). Get them to describe their feelings about these objects and tell how they acquired their magical properties. How would they feel if they lost these special items?

14-29 Interview people you know who collect some kind of object. How do they organize and describe their collections? Do you see any evidence of sacred versus profane distinctions?

14-30 Ask friends to describe an incident in which they received a gift they thought was inappropriate. Why did they feel this way, and how did this event influence the relationship between them and the gift giver?

14-31 How might the rise of peer-to-peer music sharing influence the structure of the music CPS? One guess is that this method erodes the dominance of the big labels because listeners are more likely to access music from lesser-known groups. Survey your friends to determine whether this in fact is happening. Do they listen to a wider variety of artists, or simply download more from the big-time groups?

14-32 Read several romance or action novels to see if you can identify a cultural formula at work. Do you see parallels among the roles different characters play (e.g., the hero, the evildoer, the temptress, and so on)?

14-33 U.S. television inspires knockoffs around the world. But to be fair, many U.S. viewers don't realize that U.S. reality show hits such as *Big Brother* and *American Idol* started out as European concepts that U.S. producers imported. In fact, the U.K. version of *Big Brother* briefly went off the air after a fight broke out and housemates threatened to kill each other.[175] In contrast, a Malaysian show that borrows the *American Idol* format is called *Imam Muda* (Young Leader). Contestants debate religious topics and recite passages from the Koran. The winner doesn't get a recording contract. Instead, he receives a job as an imam, or religious leader; a scholarship to study in Saudi Arabia; and an all-expenses-paid pilgrimage to Mecca, Islam's holiest city.[176] See if you can identify foreign versions of familiar reality shows. You should be able to find them online. How have the creators of these programs adapted them to appeal to local customs?

14-34 The chapter states that experience-oriented gifts (e.g., lessons) do more to strengthen the relationship between givers and receivers than do material gifts. How might a marketer in the travel industry apply this insight to his or her own efforts?

CASE STUDY Twist, Lick, and Dunk! Does it Make Oreos Taste Better?

Do you fold your pizza slice or tap your can of soda before you drink it? If so, you are practicing a food ritual. As we discussed in this chapter, rituals are sets of multiple, symbolic behaviors that occur in a fixed sequence and are repeated periodically.[177] Rituals are an important component of culture and many rituals are associated with food. Perhaps you also follow the same ritual millions of others do when eating "Milk's Favorite Cookie"—the Oreo: Twist, Lick, and Dunk!

Oreo was first introduced in 1912 and has grown to be the bestselling cookie brand of the 21st century with over $2 billion in global annual sales and a roughly 5 percent share of worldwide cookie sales—that's three times more than any other cookie.[178,179] Every year, enough Oreos are produced to circle the earth 5 times—over 40 billion![180] A great product and intensive marketing have contributed to Oreo's success, but many also give credit to the famous ritual associated with eating its delicious cookies.

One study found that food rituals like twist, lick, and dunk may actually enhance our enjoyment of the food we eat. Performing the ritual seems to boost our interest in the food; we think the eating experience is more enjoyable and we find the food more flavorful. An important finding for marketers was that the study participants who performed the ritual were willing to pay more than those who just ate the food without the ritual. The test was done with chocolate and lemonade, but it also worked with baby carrots. Perhaps we need a ritual for broccoli?[181]

Mondelēz, the maker of Oreos, has invested heavily in promotional activity designed to help us remember how to eat its cookie. A series of TV commercials shows very cute children teaching their parents how to eat the cookie properly.[182] In one, a boy and his father twist, lick, and dunk via video chat from opposite sides of the globe, wishing each other "Good Morning" and "Good Night."[183]

A recent TV and social media promotion was designed to get even more cookie fans engaged in Oreo's ritual. The "Oreo Dunk Challenge" was inspired by the study mentioned earlier, and featured celebrities Shaquille O'Neal, Christina Aguilera, and Brazilian soccer star Neymar da Silva Santos Jr. In one, Shaq (wearing a sparkly blue pantsuit) flew down a silk rope to make his dunk. Aguilera was on a tightrope and Neymar bounced off a trampoline before dunking and stopping a rolling soccer ball.[184] The promotion also included a sweepstakes in which Oreo fans submitted their own dunk videos via Twitter or Instagram.[185]

While rituals contribute to our culture, there are other societal factors that may conflict with those treasured routines or at least the products at the center of them. Oreo faced this problem a few years ago as another cultural trend took hold: the concern over childhood obesity. Some schools pulled cookies from vending machines or snack menus, and in California, a lawsuit was filed to ban the sale of Oreos to children.[186] The sales of Oreo and other cookie producers suffered.[187] Oreo responded to the public concern by eliminating all marketing in schools, including a book that used images of Oreos to teach children how to count.[188,189] The brand also introduced a vanilla cookie with no trans-fat and 100-calorie packs of its cookies.[190] Today, all Oreos are made without trans-fat.[191]

Another major cultural shift occurred with the adoption of the smartphone and with it our seemingly constant use of social media apps. How did this impact Oreo sales? In the past, shoppers waiting to pay at the grocery store were prime targets for an impulse purchase—candy, gum, or a sleeve of Oreos. Now, these waiting shoppers are probably looking at their smartphones instead of those racks full of Oreos and other delights. To try to get those consumers' attention again, Oreo sends regular social media messages—YouTube videos, Instagram ads, and Tweets, hoping the customer will take the hint to grab a pack of Oreos.[192]

For the record, not all Oreo eaters faithfully twist, lick, and dunk. About 50 percent of Oreo lovers eat their cookies whole and 50 percent pull them apart. Men are more likely than women to eat them whole.[193] But for many, this ritual will have the effect that Oreo Global Brand Director Justin Parnell intends: "OREO sees the world with childlike wonder and our iconic dunking ritual is the purest articulation of that vision. When you dunk an OREO cookie in milk, you're releasing a bit of childlike wonder from within, and it's those types of moments that our brand was built on. We're thrilled to inspire fans to dunk OREO cookies on a global scale and inspire more moments of play and wonder around the world."[194]

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CS 14.1 What other food categories or brands have rituals associated with them? If you are a participant in one or more of those rituals, do you agree with the study referenced above that this ritual increases your enjoyment of the food?

CS 14.2 Choose a food brand without an apparent ritual and come up with one that could be used in a promotional activity. (No dunking allowed.)

CS 14.3 How could Oreo assess the impact of the twist, lick, and dunk ritual? Create a simple experiment that could provide Oreo marketers with data to judge the role that the ritual plays in some marketing metric of interest (e.g., brand loyalty, likely increased frequency of purchase, or differentiation from competitive offerings).

MyLab Marketing

If your instructor has assigned these, go to the MyLab to complete these writing exercises.

14-35 Identify the ritual elements of a football game.

14-36 The chapter states that a culture is a society's personality. If your culture were a person, how would you describe its personality traits?

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Section 4 Data Case

Going Global with Juice

Background

You are the CMO (Chief Marketing Officer) for a juice company. Your juice company sells a line of premium, all-natural juices. The juice is marketed as a tasty beverage particularly well-suited for people who emphasize health and wellness in their lives. To date, your company has only sold in the United States, but you are now preparing to make your first expansion into a foreign market.

Previous research has narrowed the candidate countries down to three. Regardless of which country is selected, it has already been determined that the juice will be sold to local distributors who will then be responsible for selling to local retailers and, ultimately, consumers. Your Chief Financial Officer (CFO) has provided you some preliminary financial information, and you have also been handed a report created from the 2014 GfK Consumer Trends Global Consumer Survey. This survey reports information about each country. Importantly, it dives deeper and also segments consumers by their relative income and occupational status. In the United States, income and occupation have been important characteristics to identify the firm's juice consumers.

Your Goal

Review the data from the CFO and from the GfK consumer report. Then, make some preliminary financial estimates about the likely financial performance of the juice company. Based on your estimates, make some preliminary recommendations for your juice company's future international expansion.

The Data

- **About the data from the CFO:**
  - **PRICE:** The CFO has provided you with the assumed sale price per bottle of juice. The price has been adjusted into U.S. dollars and is assumed to be constant for each of the three countries and for any quantity of juice that is sold.
  - **MARKET SIZE:** The CFO has asked you to assume that your juice firm will account for a specific percentage of the foreign market after a single year. The market for a country is defined as the quantity of total fruit juices or fruit drinks sold in a given year.
- **About the GfK data:** The GfK Consumer Trends Global Survey is a large survey of many countries. Results for each country are adjusted to be representative of the country's population that is 15 years or older. Each country has results for four different consumer segments from the combination of income (high/low) and occupation (white collar/other occupation).
- **Size (000s) of Group:** The estimated number of people (in thousands) who are in each segment of a country. This estimate uses the CIA Factbook's 2018 estimate of the number of 15+ year olds in each country as the base to determine the total estimated size of a group.
- **% Country:** The estimated % of the entire country that is comprised of people within a particular segment.
- **% Group:** The "% Group" means the percentage of people within a segment who meet the criteria for a specific survey question.
- **Personal Values, Health and Fitness:** The percentage of segment members who scored the 2 highest possible values on how important "health and fitness" were as part of their personal values.
- **Satisfaction with Primary Shopping Location: Availability of healthy foods and beverages:** The percentage of segment members who scored the 2 highest possible values on how satisfied they were with the availability of healthy foods/beverages.
- **Drink fruit juice daily:** The percentage of segment members who said they drink fruit juice "daily."
- **Drink fruit juice weekly:** The percentage of segment members who said they drink fruit juice "weekly."
- **Drink fruit drinks daily:** The percentage of segment members who said they drink fruit drinks "daily."
- **Drink fruit drinks weekly:** The percentage of segment members who said they drink fruit drinks "weekly."
- **Regularly eat healthy, nutritious foods for: physical health:** The percentage of segment members who said this is a motivation to eat healthy foods.
- **Regularly eat healthy, nutritious foods for: mental/emotional health:** The percentage of segment members who said this is a motivation to eat healthy foods.
- **Regularly eat healthy, nutritious foods for: appearance:** The percentage of segment members who said this is a motivation to eat healthy foods.

Country		GERMANY				UK				USA			
Income group		High		Medium		High		Medium		High		Medium	
	Occup. Group	White Collar	Blue Collar	White Collar	Blue Collar	White Collar	Blue Collar	White Collar	Blue Collar	White Collar	Blue Collar	White Collar	Blue Collar
Est. Population of Country 15+ years old (CIA Factbook 2018)	(millions)			70.3			54.3				265.4		
Country Segment, % of Country	% of group	3.9	2.1	16.2	11.7	9.7	4.0	9.3	9.3	7.5	3.7	9.2	7.2
Size of group	(000s)	2,740.2	1,475.5	11,382.3	8,220.5	5266.8	2,171.9	5,049.6	5049.6	19,908.7	9,821.6	24,421.4	19,112.4
Personal Values: Health and Fitness	% of group	59.7	60.3	54.0	52.4	47.0	55.5	36.1	44.8	60.0	49.0	44.4	54.7
Satisfaction with Primary Shopping Location: Availability of healthy foods and beverages	% of group	87.7	66.0	75.3	77.5	75.1	71.5	66.6	75.2	77.2	75.4	72.6	68.6
Drink fruit juice daily	% of group	17.3	20.4	17.0	11.6	32.1	35.2	22.2	24.2	36.1	18.5	20.5	26.8
Drink fruit juice weekly	% of group	38.9	43.3	39.3	31.8	35.3	39.9	33.9	43.1	29.0	32.2	39.8	38.9
Drink fruit drinks daily	% of group	6.9	3.5	5.3	3.3	13.8	12.0	12.5	15.1	21.3	5.6	8.6	14.0
Drink fruit drinks weekly	% of group	31.8	25.5	25.8	23.3	31.7	48.2	29.6	32.9	38.7	15.8	33.0	34.9
Regularly eat healthy, nutritious foods for: physical health	% of group	55.8	62.8	51.5	49.2	61.0	75.3	49.7	54.3	70.0	66.0	60.8	49.0
Regularly eat healthy, nutritious foods for: mental/emotional health	% of group	32.7	39.3	29.9	24.1	30.2	47.7	30.5	33.9	38.5	32.7	33.2	30.7
Regularly eat healthy, nutritious foods for: appearance	% of group	46.4	33.5	37.2	35.8	29.3	45.7	40.7	37.0	50.8	31.7	39.4	34.7
CFO Data: Price per bottle to local distributors (US $)		$0.80	$0.80	$0.80	$0.80	$0.80	$0.80	$0.80	$0.80	$0.80	$0.80	$0.80	$0.80
Number of daily drinks in segment (000s)		544.5											
Beverages sold per year to segment (000s)		198,732.8											
Estimated number of annual fruit juice/drink beverages consumed per year by segment member		72.53											
CFO Data: Estimated market share within segment		10%											
Estimated annual sales (000s)		$15,898.6											
Estimated sales per consumer		$5.80											

Source: GfK Custom Research LLC.

Task 1: Understanding the Data

1. Before providing recommendations to the CFO, make sure you understand how to interpret the information presented in the table.
2. Which country has the segment with the fewest consumers in it?
3. Which country has the largest total number of potential consumers in it?
4. Find the country that has the consumer segment that makes up the largest percentage of its total amount of consumers. What is that percentage?
5. Which segment prioritizes physical appearance as a motivation for eating/drinking healthy?
6. Which segment prioritizes mental/emotional health as a motivation for eating/drinking healthy?

Task 2: Estimating Sales

Using some assumptions provided by the CFO, you are tasked with estimating the annual sales (in $) for each segment in each country. To do so, you will need to make the following assumptions:

- **Actual consumption:**
  - When someone says they drink juice or drinks fruit drinks "daily," we assume they actually have 0.7 of that drink on a typical day.
  - When someone says they drink juice or drinks fruit drinks "weekly," we assume they actually have 0.1 of that drink on a typical day.
  - For all other answers, we assume that they don't drink the beverage at all.
  - There are 365 days in a year.
- Using the data provided by GfK and the assumptions above, what are total estimated number of fruit drinks & juices (combined) that are estimated to be sold to consumers of each segment in a typical year (365 days)? The answers have been provided to you for the first column.
- **CALCULATION:**
  - Estimated Units Sold Per Segment per Year = [(Segment Total Size) × (% daily drink) × (assumed daily consumption) × (Segment Total Size) × (% weekly drink) × (assumed daily consumption) + (Segment Total Size) × (% daily drink)*(assumed daily consumption) × (Segment Total Size) × (% weekly drink)*(assumed daily consumption)] × 365
  - According to these estimates, how many beverages would we assume a typical person in each segment consumes per year?
    - **CALCULATION:**
      - Average yearly consumption per consumer = [For each segment, take the answers immediately above]/[total size of segment]

Task 3: Estimating Sales

The CFO is impressed with your initial estimates. She would like you to go even further and estimate the total sales expected within each segment after one year. Again, the CFO has provided you with some important estimates to help you make your calculations.

- **Financial Assumptions:**
  - (1) The per unit price sold to distributors will be $0.80, regardless of country or quantity sold.
  - (2) The estimated market share for sales depends on how much a segment sees health and wellness as being essential to their lives. If healthy and wellness is a priority for a segment, the CFO assumes a 10% market share in that segment during the first year is reasonable. If health and wellness is not a major priority, the market share is assumed to only be 5%. Health and wellness is considered to not be a priority for a segment if less than 50% of the members of that segment identify it as a priority.
- **Question 1:** Using the GfK data and the information provided by the CFO, what is the estimated annual sales for each segment?
  - **CALCULATION:**
    - Annual Sales $ estimated per segment = [(Original Estimated Units Sold Per Segment per Year) × (Assumed Market Share, per CFO's rules) × (Price per unit to distributors)]
- **Question 2:** Which country, overall, has the highest estimated annual sales? Which country has the lowest estimated annual sales?
- **Question 3:** Based on these estimates, how much money per consumer would we expect for each segment?

▶ DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

1. Based solely on the information that was analyzed, which country do you think your juice company should expand to? Why?
2. While making its financial estimates, your juice company did not consider the impact of every GfK survey question reported in the table above. For example, your juice company did not consider if each segments' satisfaction with the availability of healthy foods and beverages at grocery stores might impact their market share within a given segment. From your perspective, how might your juice company incorporate the rest of the GfK information into their estimates? Which questions do you think may lead to you increasing or decreasing different estimates?
3. Think about other important consumer behavior factors that might impact the success of your juice company in a foreign market. What other important information do you think is pertinent for your juice company to know but was not present in the table above? Why?



GfK Consumer Life (Roper Reports © Worldwide).



Appendix

Careers in Consumer Research

An understanding of consumers is, of course, essential in virtually every aspect of marketing. To prepare for a career in a consumer-related field, consider getting involved in relevant research that one of your professors might be doing. In addition to your Consumer Behavior course, be sure to take as many courses as possible in other aspects of marketing. Also, try to achieve proficiency in statistics and computer skills. Courses in the social sciences, particularly psychology and sociology, are also helpful.

Career Paths

The following list identifies aspects of marketing where knowledge of consumer behavior is particularly valuable:

- *Marketing research:* Researchers define problems and collect information needed to resolve them. They typically design projects, analyze data, present findings, and make recommendations to management. Researchers may be employed by corporations that maintain their own market research staffs; or they may work for independent market research firms, trade organizations, advertising agencies, the government, or nonprofit organizations.
- *Brand management:* Managers oversee and direct marketing efforts for a specific product or line of products. They oversee all aspects of product strategy, including research, packaging, sales, promotion, and forecasting.
- *Customer affairs:* A customer affairs representative acts as a liaison between the firm and its customers. He or she handles complaints and may act as an advocate for the customer within the company.
- *Global marketing:* As firms globalize their operations they need managers who understand the importance of cultural differences and who can adapt strategies to foreign markets.
- *Advertising copywriters:* Copywriters translate a brand's positioning strategy into concrete form by creating words and visual images that convey this imagery. They need to understand the target market to employ imagery that will create the desired response.
- *Advertising account executives:* An account executive supervises the development of a marketing plan and makes sure that the agency's clients understand and are happy with the plan. This job requires knowledge about all aspects of marketing, including an understanding of target markets.
- *Retail managers and merchandisers:* A department or store manager must make decisions about such factors as the store's sales force and how merchandise is displayed in the store. He or she must understand the factors that add to or subtract from the quality of the customer's experience while in the store.
- *Retail buyers:* A buyer purchases merchandise for a store. A good buyer is always "tuned in" to upcoming trends and fashions and is sensitive to the wants and needs of the store's clientele.
- *Public relations:* A public relations specialist is responsible for maintaining positive public awareness of the firm and minimizing negative reactions to company activities. Knowledge of how people's perceptions are influenced by the media is integral to this job.
- *Social media manager:* This specialist is responsible for the company's social media marketing and advertising. The manager is tasked with developing brand awareness and cultivating a positive online reputation. She or he also deals with content management (what is posted on the company's website, blogs, and so on), and cultivation of leads and sales via SEO (search engine optimization) and generation of inbound traffic to the website.

The Industry Route

Many entry-level jobs are available to a competent person with a bachelor's degree (although in some fields, it is increasingly difficult to get hired without at least a master's degree). A typical starting position for a university graduate in a marketing research firm, for example, would be as an assistant project manager. This person assists in the

design and administration of studies and ensures that they are enacted within the prescribed budget. The beginner may also be assigned to supervise field operations, overseeing the actual collection of data, and perhaps coding and analyzing it.

Over time the person might move up to a supervisory position with increasing responsibility. Eventually the person might attain the position of vice-president of marketing research, where he or she would be responsible for the entire company's marketing research efforts and be part of senior management. Chances of moving up tend to improve greatly if the individual received advanced training in statistics, experimental design, and other aspects of consumer psychology.

The Academic Route

Another alternative is to consider training to become a scholar in the field of consumer behavior. Many major business schools offer doctoral programs in marketing in which it is possible to specialize in consumer behavior research. In addition, some psychology departments offer doctoral programs in consumer psychology. The typical doctoral program involves from four to seven years of intensive study, during which the student is trained in both theoretical and technical aspects of consumer research. Many doctoral students in business have already earned an M.B.A., though this is not always the case.

Most consumer behavior Ph.D.s who did not obtain their degrees in marketing were trained in psychology. Other possible fields of study—as the discipline's perspective continues to widen—are sociology, anthropology, economics, history, English, human ecology, and others.

These individuals might take faculty positions in a business school, where they conduct research that is published in such academic journals as the *Journal of Consumer Research* and the *Journal of Consumer Psychology*. They can also work as consultants to corporations, advertising agencies, and the government. Also, those with Ph.D.s are in demand for full-time non-academic positions, such as in consulting firms and "think tanks," or in advertising agencies, manufacturing companies, trade groups (e.g., the Wool Bureau or the Conference Board), or government agencies.

For further insight into these possibilities, consider asking your professor about his or her educational background and research activities.



Appendix II
Research Methods

As we saw in Chapter 1 (see especially Table 1.1), there are many approaches to studying consumer behavior. They range from one-on-one intensive interviews to sophisticated analyses of "Big Data" that may involve (literally) millions of observations. If you are a marketing major, the odds are quite good that you will take a separate course on marketing research. So for now, we'll only briefly review some of the many methodologies available to researchers.

Remember that information we collect for our own use is called **primary data**, while information that others collect (and we use or purchase) is called **secondary data**. For example, if your professor assigns you to interview friends and family members on their thoughts about snack food brands (or snacking in general), you are collecting primary data. If on the other hand he or she? assigns you to analyze the information the GfK marketing research firm kindly provided at several places in this text, you are using secondary data that was collected by someone else. In this section we're going to focus on different types of primary data. Appendix III provides more information about some sources of secondary data that many companies also use.

We'll roughly divide these approaches into qualitative and quantitative approaches. Keep in mind that in most cases qualitative research intends to probe for insights and hopefully to identify the "deep meanings" that explain why people choose some products over others, or how they use these products (or services) in their daily lives. These insights don't necessarily apply to *everyone* in a target market, but they provide a solid foundation that quantitative approaches may later complement or that may try to probe for whether X causes Y (for example, do shoppers buy more French wine in a liquor store when French music is playing in the background?). In other cases, these studies try to describe a bigger phenomenon, such as what many consumers are posting online about the latest brand introduction, or whether Americans' attitudes toward green marketing have changed in the last five years.

To put these approaches into perspective, meet Brittany. She is 23 years old, and she recently graduated college with a degree in marketing. Brittany landed a job in the Marketing Department of On Deck, a small company that makes skateboard decks and a limited amount of skate gear. Actually, Brittany *is* the Marketing Department! Her college friend Cody started On Deck in his basement when a sophomore, and now he's sold enough merch to actually move into a converted warehouse near Laguna Beach. That's because his designs caught the attention of an "angel investor" who pumped enough money into the business to give it a good kick start. A staff of five guys (all fraternity brothers of Cody's) make the decks, and Cody designs the hats, hoodies, and shirts that then get made in China. Brittany's task is to understand the skateboard market and help Cody to grow the business with a limited research budget. She needs to get a handle on how potential customers think about the emerging On Deck brand, and understand how "wood pushers" choose one board over others.

Qualitative Methods

Brittany will probably want to start with some quick-and-dirty projects that will start to give her some insights into skateboarding culture such as these:

Interview: A one-on-one discussion where the interviewer asks a respondent detailed questions about their purchase decisions and product use.

Brittany can go to a skate park and strike up conversations with the people there. She may offer each person some kind of **incentive** to talk to her, such as a discount coupon for On Deck products. She will probably want to record (audio or video) these conversations—with the permission of the respondents—so she can consult the interviews later. This will help her to recall what they said, but also to look for possible nonverbal cues such as fidgeting or other body language that may indicate whether respondents have any problems with parts of the conversations.

This is a great way to gain some initial understanding, and the ability to probe for additional responses can provide insights more formal methods can't. But, these interviews are very subjective and what people say can differ based upon many factors such as the gender and age of

the interviewer. In this case, they may say (or boast) about things to a young woman like Brittany that they wouldn't say to (for example) a middle-aged man.

Focus group: A small group of people discusses a topic, either in person or in some kind of online format. A trained interviewer leads the discussion and tries to *focus* the conversation on the issue without letting some people dominate or go off on tangents.

Typically the focus group moderator submits a report to the client that offers a summary, insights, and recommendations. A professionally run focus group typically costs around $3,000 to $5,000. It's often useful to run a few to be sure the results aren't too biased due to the makeup of one group. For example, although a trained moderator can minimize the problem, sometimes (as in the occasional college class) one or two people dominate the group and others are less willing to share their real opinions.

Stories, photos and diaries: Consumers can write stories about their own experiences with products or those of others. Researchers might ask them to take pictures of people using the product, or perhaps to react to pictures they provide. In the latter case, they may employ **projective techniques** that use ambiguous stimuli to draw consumers out. That's especially effective when respondents are reluctant or unable to discuss their own behavior. Finally, a company can pay people to keep a diary about their product usage. They may record how much they use the product, where, and under what circumstances. Note: All of these techniques may be combined with focus groups or interviews. So Brittany might enlist a small number of boarders to basically act as researchers themselves; they might take pictures of others in action, or even write a story about a "day in the life" of a typical skateboarder. These stories aren't necessarily 100 percent factual (what stories are?), but they can provide good insights into the *ideal* usage situations for these respondents.

Ethnography: A research technique adapted from anthropology that requires the researcher to "live with the natives," in other words, to immerse herself into a natural setting where people consume the product of interest.

Anthropologists often live with the cultures they study for years at a time, but in most cases marketing ethnographies get done much quicker! Still, ideally, the researcher should spend some time with a subculture so that people accept him or her. This should be an immersive experience where the researcher becomes part of the group. However, ethical issues can arise when the researcher doesn't reveal the true reason for participation.

Britanny can spend a good amount of time among skateboarders and, over time, document their likes and dislikes. Even though they may know she works for a skateboard company, over time it's likely they will feel pretty comfortable with her around and they won't "censor" their behavior when she's present. She will probably gain the types of insights these consumers would never honestly share with a strange researcher, though it may take a substantial time investment for this to happen.

Netnography: This technique essentially moves ethnographic studies to the online world. It's a qualitative approach that examines the kinds of cultural stories people swap online about brands. These might be as simple as recipe suggestions brand users post that incorporate a food product, or the analyst might examine many kinds of blogs, forums, and other online content to get a sense of the issues people grapple with in their RL (real life) worlds and how they view certain brands as solutions to these problems.

These conversations can be very useful to marketers. For example, they can learn a lot about the jargon actual consumers use to describe their products or discover uses for what they make that hadn't occurred to them. Brittany would be smart to at least conduct an informal netnography—she should spend time on skateboarding forums and blog posts where members of this "taste subculture" (see Chapter 13) communicate with one another. To put it another way: Fish where the fish are!

Shop-along: An interviewer accompanies people while they shop in a store. In this "shadowing" activity, the researcher will ask questions as the respondents look at different options to get a sense of their turn-ons or turn-offs. The interviewer may recruit respondents ahead of time, or simply ask people as they enter the store if they're willing to be shadowed.

A similar activity is a **pantry check**; this is a project that food and beverage companies often do. In these cases they visit people's homes and catalog what they have in their refrigerator or on their shelves. And a rarer but sometimes effective exercise is called—believe it or not—**garbology.** Here researchers actually sift through people's garbage to catalog what they throw out. Why would anyone want to take on such a smelly assignment? In some cases, respondents aren't necessarily truthful, so there is a gap between what they say they buy and what they actually do. For example, people often underestimate the amount of liquor they consume so a count of discarded bottles they leave in the garbage can be very informative.

Brittany might consider doing some shop-alongs to understand how skateboard customers evaluate merchandise in stores and to see whether they interact with other shoppers or with store employees to get advice about what to buy. She may identify "pain points" in the shopping experience such as difficulty finding certain items or getting competent advice from salespeople. And, shoppers might try out different boards at some stores so again she can get an "up close and personal" sense of what they look for in a new deck and what turns them off.

Quantitative Methods

Remember that quantitative techniques typically aim to generalize insights to a larger group of customers. They can yield powerful results, but as you might guess they tend to be more complicated and typically much more expensive than qualitative methods. That's why it's a good idea to do qualitative research *first*, even if you're planning to eventually implement one or more of these techniques. The more you know in advance about the types of questions to include, the less costly it will be. When you're conducting a survey with 5,000 respondents, it's not so easy to change questions that don't make sense to them!

Survey: A set of questions about a topic that the researcher typically administers to a reasonably large sample of respondents.

In many cases the sample is not only large, but it is carefully chosen to represent a target market—the *respondent universe*. The survey usually includes a number of **closed-ended questions** that respondents answer on a scale of some kind (for example, a 7-point scale with the ends labeled something like Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree). It may also include some **open-ended questions** that require respondents to write or type in their own responses.

Surveys used to be administered largely by mail or even in person, but today they are much more likely to be done either on the phone or online (unfortunately, some unscrupulous telemarketers "poison the well" for legitimate survey takers when they call people and pretend they are doing a legitimate survey that is really a pretext for a sales pitch).

Surveys are particularly valuable when they are repeated periodically because analysts can track changes over time. For example, the U.S. Census is done every ten years and thus the Census Bureau can report changes in demographics such as, for example, the number of unmarried people of opposite sex who live together (POSSLQs, or Persons of Opposite Sex Sharing Living Quarters). Many organizations track important changes on psychographic variables such as consumer confidence, attitudes toward social issues like gun control, or perhaps even behaviors like getting body piercings!

Unlike many forms of qualitative research, survey responses are anonymous (unless an interviewer administers it in person, which is a rare occurrence these days). Thus surveys are well-suited to examine sensitive topics like drug consumption or whether people practice safe sex. However, even though this seems like a "scientific" approach, survey results can still be quite biased if questions are asked in a leading way. In addition, well-intentioned people sometimes want to "please the experimenter," so they may politely give more positive answers about a product than honest but critical ones.

Brittany might consider commissioning a survey on boarders' attitudes toward various brands, as well as more general issues such as how much they prioritize boarding in their leisure time over other activities. She might hire a research firm to develop an expertly written survey that is sent to a well-defined sample. Of course, that can get expensive. Today there are less costly alternatives, such as Facebook surveys or platforms like Survey Monkey or Mechanical Turk that allow just about anyone to create their own questionnaires and recruit respondents for free or for a very small fraction of what professional firms pay.

However, let the buyer beware: **GIGO**. This means Garbage In, Garbage Out. It's hard to generalize your results when you don't really know who responds. If Brittany goes the DIY (do it yourself) route, her results will only be as good as the questions she writes, her knowledge about how to analyze the data, and of course who responds to her survey. Professional survey firms are quite scrupulous about who they recruit, so for example they usually weed out "professional survey takers" who love to take surveys as much as possible regardless of the issue.

Experiment: A controlled study where researchers randomly assign respondents to different "conditions" and measure how they behave as a result.

Researchers may conduct an experiment if they want to identify whether one variable (an **independent variable**) "causes" another (a **dependent variable**). By varying respondents' exposure to one or more independent variables and (hopefully) holding everything else constant, the researcher can with some degree of confidence attribute any changes in behavior to the things that were manipulated.

For example, let's say a cable network wants to test whether a certain commercial that features the well-known influencer Bethany Mota endorsing a new skincare brand draws enough interested buyers to justify the fee they must pay her. Researchers might create two versions of the spot; one with Bethany and another with an unknown woman of the same age. It might even create a third version—a **control group**—that doesn't include any endorser. In each version, everything else is identical, such as the text that describes the product and even the look and feel of the ad.

The network *randomly* splits its viewer base into subgroups and each of these sees one version of the commercial (the independent variable) at the same time and during the same show. Researchers then measure calls to an 800 number at the end of the spot from viewers who want to buy the product (the dependent variable). If Bethany's version pulls 10,000 calls and the other versions pull 2,000 each, they can be fairly confident that it will be worth it to pay Bethany for her endorsement. In other words, we can conclude it's extremely likely that including an influencer like Bethany *causes* many new buyers to respond who would not take

the bait if she wasn't in the spot. Note: The purist will tell you that we can *never* be 100 percent sure that one variable causes another; we can only reduce but not eliminate the possibility that the effect was caused by chance. In fact, in many cases the accepted standard for statisticians is that the odds are 5 percent or less that the change in behavior was caused by chance. That's why in reports of results from experiments you often see the label, p<.05. It's always possible that for some bizarre reason the viewers who saw the Bethany spot were more inclined to buy the product anyway even though they were chosen randomly. That's one reason we want to include larger samples when possible as this helps us to reduce (but again, never eliminate!) the possibility that something funky happened during the experiment.

By the way, this particular kind of relatively simple experiment is called an **A/B Test**, and cable networks in fact do them often. And, although many experiments are done in laboratories where researchers can better control other circumstances, this kind of study is called a **field experiment** because it takes place in the real world. Indeed, many e-commerce companies literally perform hundreds of similar A/B Tests in short periods of time as they constantly explore in real time whether very subtle factors such as the color or font size in an online ad results in a more effective appeal.

And, this also is how most **market tests** are done when a company wants to gauge the likely success of a new product before it's released to the larger market. Here, we can see how researchers sometimes have to forfeit some control in order to get results: It's not uncommon for a rival to get wind of the fact that a company is using a certain city as a test market and to send operatives in to buy large quantities of their products in order to contaminate the results!

Another specialized kind of experiment is called a **conjoint analysis**. This is a sophisticated technique that exposes respondents in a laboratory setting to many different permutations of a brand in order to identify the optimal mixture of ingredients, colors, and so on. For example, Brittany might name four attributes of skateboarding hats (number of panels, price, color, and so on) and then researchers will show respondents a series of pictures or slides that vary the levels of each variable in each configuration. They will then analyze responses across respondents to different combinations to determine if some attributes are more important than others or to see if people prefer one level of an attribute (e.g. a four-panel hat) over others.

Data Mining and **"Big Data"**: "Big Data" is all the rage these days, as marketers gain access to huge amounts of information about consumers (with all the privacy issues that go with this).

Typically a database of this nature combines information from several sources so that analysts "know" an enormous amount of information about a very large number of consumers. Because the sample size is so large, they are able to use sophisticated analytical techniques to search for patterns in the data, a practice known as **data mining**. Very large firms such as American Express and Walmart mine their huge databases to understand buying patterns (e.g. consumers who buy a lot of Product X also tend to buy a lot of Product Y) and increasingly to predict what people will buy based upon past purchases.

Note that these techniques typically don't try to predict what any one person will buy, but rather what they are likely to do given that they are a lot like others in the database. When you get a book recommendation from Amazon, a similar process has occurred. However, even this constraint is starting to go away: Amazon is experimenting with predictive distribution. By combing through past purchases, it is starting to ship orders to warehouses even before the consumers place them!

Brittany is unlikely to open this door given her small budget and access to limited data about her customers, but she could conceivably hire a research firm to provide more general insights about the types of people who buy surfboarding gear (essentially, a very large and expensive psychographic analysis). Similarly, she might find that various trade associations do have sufficient resources to commission such studies—again not focused on the On Deck brand *per se*, but more generally on the skateboard market.

And, it gets better: As so many of us constantly post about our experiences (good and bad) with brands, this content presents a new and enormously useful window onto consumer behavior that researchers are still figuring out. **Web scraping** refers to techniques that extract large amounts of data from websites so that analysts can deposit this information into very large databases and track what thousands of people are saying about brands—in real time!

As we saw in Chapter 5, one important type of web scraping analysis is called *sentiment analysis* or *opinion mining*. These terms refer to the process of determining the emotional tone behind a series of words, used to gain an understanding of the attitudes, opinions, and emotions expressed within an online mention. This technique is one of the most widely used in social media research. It works with the aid of software that systematically searches key words it finds in social spaces like blogs, social networks, and forums. Think of sentiment analysis as an early warning system for a brand.

How do marketers use sentiment analysis? Analysts can track product reviews to offer insight into the least and most popular features that are available. They can look at news mentions of a company to indicate the industry's perceptions in terms of product quality, service quality, performance, and value. Customers use sentiment analysis

to systematically utilize reviews when they make purchase decisions—we love to find restaurants with glowing Yelp reviews and we're more confident when we see 1000 of these rather than 10.

In addition, positive comments can turn into customer testimonials for use in retailing and promotions. Comments about competitors serve as competitive intelligence. Conversations among like-minded groups of friends and connections provide consumer insight that's useful for targeting and positioning. Monitoring results in the development of a detailed database that analysts can use to create more insights as they synthesize the comments of hundreds or even thousands of people. These techniques gain in sophistication almost daily, especially as analysts begin to apply more elaborate artificial intelligence engines (like IBM's Watson®) to probe for intricate patterns among many thousands of posts. There's an enormous amount of chatter about there about brands—most likely including Brittany's. Sentiment analysis will allow her to constantly monitor the emotional landscape and be proactive about managing her organization's image.

Neuromarketing: Another approach that's getting a lot of buzz is "neuromarketing," where researchers adapt techniques that neuroscientists use to study psychophysiological reactions to brands that occur in the brain or elsewhere in the body.

These measures include involuntary changes in our bodies when we become emotionally aroused or stressed such as GSR (galvanic skin response), pupil dilation, heart rate, and facial muscle movements. As we saw earlier, there are times when consumers can't or won't tell us accurately what they're feeling, but these physiological measures don't lie. More recently, neuroscientists have begun to administer fMRIs (functional magnetic resonance imaging) to respondents to detect changes in brain activity when people look at various stimuli such as photos of different brands or logos. Brittany is unlikely to prioritize these techniques at this point, but as they become more affordable and accessible she may well turn to them down the road (for example, some companies now use portable fMRI machines that no longer require the respondent to lie immobile in a claustrophobic machine for a long period of time).

As you can see, there are many tools available to gain insights into consumer behavior. All have their strengths and weaknesses. For this reason, it's great when possible to use more than one in order to triangulate on more accurate guidelines for marketing strategy. And, remember that no single method is appropriate to answer all research questions. Above all, don't be a hammer in search of a nail—just because you like or have mastered one approach doesn't mean you should apply it to every single marketing issue you encounter!

KEY TERMS

A/B test
Big data
Closed-ended questions
Conjoint analysis
Control group
Data mining
Dependent variable
Ethnography
Experiment
Field experiment
Focus group
Garbology
GIGO
Incentive
Independent variable
Interview
Market tests
Netnography
Neuromarketing
Open-ended questions
Pantry check
Primary data
Projective techniques
Secondary data
Shop-along
Survey
Web scraping

Appendix III

Sources of Secondary Data

Many organizations in the government and private sector collect information on consumer buying patterns. One good place to start is GfK, the international marketing research company that supplied data for the exercises in this text: www.gfk.com.

A list of selected other secondary data sources and indices that are particularly useful to consumer researchers follows. Many of these sources are available in the reference section of your library.

- *ABI/Inform Ondisc.* Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International. These are abstracts (on compact disc) of articles from business journals.
- *Aging America: Trends and Projections.* Washington, DC, Government Printing Office: U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging and the American Association of Retired Persons. This gives data on demographic characteristics and growth projections on the elderly over the next 30 years.
- *American Marketing Association International Directory & Marketing Services Guide.* Chicago: American Marketing Association. This complete directory of AMA members includes both individual and corporate listings and a guide to marketing research firms, by area of specialization (published annually).
- *Ipsos Reid Group Inc.* Many syndicated studies are available for purchase. The cost of the surveys depends on their age.
- *BAR/LNA Multi-Media Service.* New York: Leading National Advertisers. This is a listing of advertising expenditures for media and specific brands (updated quarterly).
- *Business Information Sources.* Berkeley: University of California Press. Listed are sources of information about market research and statistical data.
- *Business Periodicals Index.* New York: H.W. Wilson Company. This is an index of business periodicals (updated monthly).
- *Communication Abstracts.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. This is an index of articles and books on topics related to advertising and marketing (published quarterly).
- *Directory of Online Databases.* Santa Monica, CA: Cuadra Associates, Inc. The directory lists online databases.
- *Dissertation Abstracts International.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Microfilms International. This is an index of doctoral dissertations, including relevant studies in the humanities and social sciences section, from major universities (updated monthly).
- *Encyclopedia of Information Systems and Services.* Detroit: Gale Research Company. The encyclopedia is a source of information about producers of various databases.
- *FINDEX: The Directory of Market Research Reports, Studies, and Surveys.* Bethesda, MD: Cambridge Information Group. This international guide to reports is produced by research companies.
- *Guide to Consumer Markets.* New York: The Conference Board. Data on consumer spending and income is published (annually) in this guide.
- *Print Measurement Bureau Production Profile Guide.* This is product data in a two-year database from a sample of more than 20,000 respondents (1-800-PMB-0899).
- *Social Sciences Citation Index.* Philadelphia: Institute for Scientific Information. This is an index of articles in social science periodicals (updated three times a year).
- *Standard Directory of Advertisers.* Wilmette, IL: National Register Publishing Company. This directory is a guide to companies whose advertising spending exceeds $75,000 and includes information such as their agencies, types of media used, and specific products advertised.
- *www.orcinternational.com:* A commercial service that performs regular industry analyses and provides one-page industry profile summaries.

- *www.fuld.com:* A competitive intelligence service with corporate information.
- *www.gfk.com.*
- *www.marketingpower.com:* American Marketing Association.
- *www.nielsen.com.*
- *www.kpmg.com.*
- *www.ipsos.com.*
- *www.comscore.com:* The websites for research firms that sell summaries of reports on various topics.
- *www.mintel.com* North American consumer trends.
- *www.pantone.com* Color forecasting for different industries.
- *www.qscores.com* Comprehensive ratings of the attractiveness and visibility of celebrity endorsers.
- *www.strategicbusinessinsights.com.*
- *www.visioncritical.com.*

Research Centers

Center for Mature Consumer Studies
College of Business Administration
Georgia State University
https://robinson.gsu.edu/academic-departments/marketing/faculty/center-for-mature-consumer-studies/

The Conference Board
Consumer Research Center
https://www.conference-board.org/

Marketing Science Institute
https://www.msi.org/

The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research
https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/

International Sources

Statistics Canada
https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/start

Center for International Research
U.S. Bureau of the Census
https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/international-programs.html

Population Institute
East-West Center
https://www.eastwestcenter.org/education/student-programs/current-ewc-students/community-building-institute

European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research (ESOMAR)
https://www.esomar.org/

Euromonitor
http://www.euromonitor.com/

Population Reference Bureau, Inc.
https://www.prb.org/

United Nations
Public Inquiries Unit
Public Services Section
Department of Public Information
http://www.un.org/en/sections/department-public-information/department-public-information/department-public-information/index.html

The World Bank
https://www.worldbank.org/

GLOSSARY

80/20 rule a rule-of-thumb in volume segmentation, which says that about 20 percent of consumers in a product category (the heavy users) account for about 80 percent of sales

A/B test an experiment that shows two versions of a message to respondents to determine if one option is more effective

ABC model of attitudes a multidimensional perspective stating that attitudes are jointly defined by affect, behavior, and cognition

Absolute threshold the minimum amount of stimulation that can be detected on a given sensory channel

Acceptance cycles a way to differentiate among fashions in terms of their longevity

Acculturation the process of learning the beliefs and behaviors endorsed by another culture

Acculturation agents friends, family, local businesses, and other reference groups that facilitate the learning of cultural norms

Activation models of memory approaches to memory stressing different levels of processing that occur and activate some aspects of memory rather than others, depending on the nature of the processing task

Activity stores a retailing concept that lets consumers participate in the production of the products or services being sold in the store

Actual self a person's realistic appraisal of his or her qualities

Adaptation the process that occurs when a sensation becomes so familiar that it no longer commands attention

Adaptive clothing apparel products that are modified to accommodate wearers with physical disabilities

Advergaming online games merged with interactive advertisements that let companies target specific types of consumers

Advertising wear-out the condition that occurs when consumers become so used to hearing or seeing a marketing stimulus that they no longer pay attention to it

Affect the way a consumer feels about an attitude object

Affluenza well-off consumers who are stressed or unhappy despite of, or even because of, their wealth

Age cohort a group of consumers of approximately the same age who have undergone similar experiences

Agentic goals an emphasis on self-assertion and mastery, often associated with traditional male gender roles

Agile marketing a decision-making process that uses data and analytics to continuously source promising opportunities or solutions to problems in real time, deploy tests quickly, evaluate the results, and quickly improve on an ongoing basis

AIOs (activities, interests, and opinions) the psychographic variables researchers use to group consumers

Allegory a story told about an abstract trait or concept that has been personified as a person, animal, or vegetable

Alternate-reality game (ARG) an application that blends online and offline clues and encourages players to collaborate to solve a puzzle

Ambicultural an identity that is a mixture of two subcultures

Anthropomorphism the tendency to attribute human characteristics to objects or animals

Antibrand communities groups of consumers who share a common disdain for a celebrity, store, or brand

Anticonsumption the actions taken by consumers involving the deliberate defacement or mutilation of products

Antifestival an event that distorts the symbols associated with other holidays

Approach–approach conflict a person must choose between two desirable alternatives

Approach–avoidance conflict a person desires a goal but wishes to avoid it at the same time

Archetypes a universally shared idea or behavior pattern, central to Carl Jung's conception of personality; archetypes involve themes—such as birth, death, or the devil—that appear frequently in myths, stories, and dreams

Artificial intelligence (AI) Data applications that improve over time as they learn from prior analyses

Art product a creation viewed primarily as an object of aesthetic contemplation without any functional value

Aspirational reference group high-profile athletes and celebrities used in marketing efforts to promote a product

Associative network a memory system that organizes individual units of information according to some set of relationships; may include such concepts as brands, manufacturers, and stores

Astroturfing a company's attempts to write fake reviews of its products in the absence of real, "grass roots" support

Asynchronous communications messages that don't require all participants to respond immediately

Atmospherics the use of space and physical features in store design to evoke certain effects in buyers

Attention the assignment of processing activity to selected stimuli

Attitude a lasting, general evaluation of people (including oneself), objects, or issues

Attitude accessibility perspective an attitude will guide the evaluation of the object but *only* if a person's memory activates it when she encounters the object

Attitude models frameworks that identify specific components and combine them to predict a consumer's overall attitude toward a product or brand

Attitude object (A_o) anything toward which one has an attitude

Attitude toward the act of buying (A_{act}) the perceived consequences of a purchase

Audio watermarking a technique where composers and producers weave a distinctive sound/motif into a piece of music that sticks in people's minds over time

Augmented reality (AR) technology applications that layer digital information over a physical space to add additional information for users

Autonomous vehicles self-driving cars

Avoidance-avoidance conflict a choice situation where both alternatives are undesirable

Avoidance groups reference groups that exert a negative influence on individuals because they are motivated to distance themselves from group members

Avoidance selves the type of person we don't want to be that motivates us not to consume products we associate with this image

B2C e-commerce businesses selling to consumers through electronic marketing

Baby Boomers a large cohort of people born between the years of 1946 and 1964 who are the source of many important cultural and economic changes

Back-translation a technique in which a different interpreter retranslates a translated ad back into its original language to catch errors

Badges evidence of some achievement consumers display either in the physical world or on social platforms

Balance theory a theory that considers relations among elements a person might perceive as belonging together, and people's tendency to change relations among elements to make them consistent or "balanced"

Basking in reflected glory the practice of publicizing connections with successful people or organizations to enhance one's own standing

Beacons devices in a retail environment that communicate with shoppers' phones as they walk through the aisles

Behavior a consumer's actions with regard to an attitude object

Behavioral economics the study of the behavioral determinants of economic decisions

Behavioral learning theories the perspectives on learning that assume that learning takes place as the result of responses to external events

Being space a retail environment that resembles a residential living room where customers are encouraged to congregate

Belief systems a person's underlying beliefs; the extent to which people share a belief system is a function of individual, social, and cultural forces; believers tend to be exposed to information that supports their beliefs.

Beta marriage A new type of relationship where partners can choose to renew, renegotiate or split after an agreed number of years.

Big Data the collection and analysis of extremely large datasets to identify patterns of behavior in a group of consumers

Big Five a set of five dimensions that form the basis of personality: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism

Binary opposition a defining structural characteristic of many myths in which two opposing ends of some dimension are represented (e.g., good versus evil, nature versus technology)

Biohackers people who explore new ways to integrate their bodies with technology

Bioterrorism a strategy to disrupt the nation's food supply with the aim of creating economic havoc

Bitcoin an online currency system that uses peer-to-peer technology and does not coordinate with any central authority or banks

Blockchain an encryption technique that avoids banks to regulate the generation of units of currency and verify the transfer of funds

Body image a consumer's subjective evaluation of his or her physical self

Body image distortions psychological disorders that cause the patient to believe that his or her body is bigger or smaller than others see it

Boomerang kids grown children who return to their parents' home to live

Botnets a set of computers that are penetrated by malicious software known as *malware* that allows an external agent to control their actions

Bottom of the pyramid the huge number of consumers around the world who have low incomes

Bounded rationality a concept in behavioral economics that states because we rarely have the resources (especially the time) to weigh every possible factor into a decision, we settle for a solution that is just good enough

Brand community a set of consumers who share a set of social relationships based on usage or interest in a product

Brand equity a brand that has strong positive associations in a consumer's memory and commands a lot of loyalty as a result

Brand immigrants noncore users who try to claim membership within a community of users

Brand loyalty repeat purchasing behavior that reflects a conscious decision to continue buying the same brand

Brand personality a set of traits people attribute to a product as if it were a person

Brand prominence the display of blatant status symbols to ensure that others recognize one's luxury brands

Brand resonance the condition that occurs when a brand truly speaks to some aspect of a consumer's individual life or the culture in which he or she lives

Brand storytelling a marketing communications approach that emphasizes the importance of giving a product a rich background to involve customers in its history or experience

Brand tourists noncore users who buy the brand but who do not seek admittance into a community of users

Brandfests a corporate-sponsored event intended to promote strong brand loyalty among customers

BRIC nation the bloc of nations with rapid economic development: Brazil, Russia, India, and China

Bro culture a critical term to describe the situation when the worst aspects of stereotypical fraternity life make their way into corporate culture—hard partying, motivating employees with public humiliation, and treating women as sexual playthings

Bromance a relationship characterized by strong affection between two straight males

Business ethics rules of conduct that guide actions in the marketplace

Business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce Internet interactions between two or more businesses or organizations

Business-to-business (B2B) marketers specialists in meeting the needs of organizations such as corporations, government agencies, hospitals, and retailers

Buyclass theory of purchasing a framework that characterizes organizational buying decisions in terms of how much cognitive effort is involved in making a decision

Buyer personas a "story" about your ideal customer based on market research and real data about your existing customers

Buying center the part of an organization charged with making purchasing decisions

Buzz marketing messages that consumers perceive to be authentic and consumer generated

C2C e-commerce consumer-to-consumer activity through the Internet

Category exemplars brands that are particularly relevant examples of a broader classification

Cause marketing a strategy that aligns a company or brand with a cause to generate business and societal benefits

Celebrity endorsements a communications tactic whereby an organization retains a well-known person to tout a product or cause on its behalf

Cellphone zombie a term to describe a person who walks while texting and is unaware of his or her surroundings

CEO pay ratio a ratio that compares the salary of a company's chief executive to the earnings of a typical employee

Chavs British term that refers to young, lower-class men and women who mix flashy brands and accessories from big names such as Burberry with track suits

Chipped a form of wearable computing that inserts a computer chip into a person's wrist or other body part

Chunking a process in which information is stored by combining small pieces of information into larger ones

Classic a fashion with an extremely long acceptance cycle

Classical conditioning the learning that occurs when a stimulus eliciting a response is paired with another stimulus that initially does not elicit a response on its own but will cause a similar response over time because of its association with the first stimulus

Closed-ended questions survey items that ask the respondent to choose an answer on a numerical scale

Closure principle the *Gestalt* principle that describes a person's tendency to supply missing information to perceive a holistic image

Co-branding strategies linking products together to create a more desirable connotation in consumer minds

Co-consumers other patrons in a consumer setting

Co-creation involving consumers in the process of developing advertising and other marketing actions

Codes the ways members of a shared culture express and interpret meanings

Coercive power influence over another person because of social or physical intimidation cohesiveness

Cognition the beliefs a consumer has about an attitude object

Cognitive learning theory approaches that stress the importance of internal mental processes; this perspective views people as problem solvers who actively use information from the world around them to master their environment

Cohabitate people who live together without being married

Collaborative consumption a term to describe the new sharing economy, where people rent or barter what they need rather than buying it

Collecting the systematic acquisition of a particular object or set of objects

Collective decision making situations in which more than one person chooses the products or services that multiple consumers use

Collective selection many people tend to adopt a new style simultaneously

Collective self a process of self-definition whereby an individual's identity is largely derived from his or her group memberships

Collective value creation the process whereby brand community members work together to develop better ways to use and customize products

College wage premium the gap between what workers with a college degree earn compared with those without one

Color forecasts predictions that manufacturers and retailers buy so they can be sure they stock up on the next hot hue

Communal goals an emphasis on affiliation and the fostering of harmonious relations, often associated with traditional female gender roles

Communications model a framework specifying that a number of elements are necessary for communication to be achieved, including a source, message, medium, receivers, and feedback

Comparative advertising a strategy in which a message compares two or more specifically named or recognizably presented brands and makes a comparison of them in terms of one or more specific attributes

Compatibility in the context of diffusion of innovations, the extent to which a new product fits with a consumer's preexisting lifestyle

Compensatory rules a set of rules that allows information about attributes of competing products to be averaged in some way; poor standing on one attribute can potentially be offset by good standing on another

Complexity in the context of diffusion of innovation, the extent to which a new product is difficult to use or to integrate into a person's daily life

Compliance belief that we form an attitude because it helps us to gain rewards or avoid punishment

Compulsive consumption the process of repetitive, often excessive, shopping used to relieve tension, anxiety, depression, or boredom

Conditioned response (CR) a response to a conditioned stimulus caused by the learning of an association between a conditioned stimulus (CS) and an unconditioned stimulus (UCS)

Conditioned stimulus (CS) a stimulus that produces a learned reaction through association over time

Conditioned superstition consumers who don't feel they have control over their outcomes come to associate a product that is paired with a reward with the outcome itself

Conformity a change in beliefs or actions as a reaction to real or imagined group pressure

Conjoint analysis a statistical technique that exposes respondents in a laboratory setting to many different permutations of a brand in order to identify the optimal mixture of ingredients, colors, or other variables

Conjunctive rule the decision maker establishes cut-offs for each attribute and chooses a brand if it meets all the cutoffs, but rejects a brand that fails to meet any one cut-off

Connexity a lifestyle term coined by the advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi to describe young consumers who place high value on being both footloose and connected

Conscientious consumerism a new value that combines a focus on personal health with a concern for global health

Consideration set the products a consumer actually deliberates about choosing

Conspicuous consumption the purchase and prominent display of luxury goods to provide evidence of a consumer's ability to afford them

Constructive processing a thought process in which a person evaluates the effort he or she will need to make a particular choice, and then tailors the amount of cognitive "effort" expended to make this decision

Consumed consumers those people who are used or exploited, whether willingly or not, for commercial gain in the marketplace

Consumer a person who identifies a need or desire, makes a purchase, or disposes of the product

Consumer addiction a physiological or psychological dependency on products or services

Consumer animosity intense dislike toward a brand, often due to a political or social position with which people disagree

Consumer behavior the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires

Consumer confidence the extent to which people are optimistic or pessimistic about the future health of the economy

Consumer confusion in legal contexts, the likelihood that one company's logo, product design, or package is so similar to another that the typical shopper would mistake one for the other

Consumer culture theory (CCT) the study of consumption from a cultural perspective rather than a psychological or economic focus

Consumer fairy tales stories that consumers create involving products that help them to overcome villains and obstacles

Consumer hyperchoice the profusion of options in the modern marketplace that forces us to make repeated decisions that may drain psychological energy while decreasing our abilities to make smart choices

Consumer identity renaissance the redefinition process people undergo when they retire

Consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction (CS/D) the overall attitude a person has about a product after it has been purchased

Consumer socialization the process by which people acquire skills that enable them to function in the marketplace

Consumer style a pattern of behaviors, attitudes, and opinions that influences all of a person's consumption activities—including attitudes toward advertising, preferred channels of information and purchase, brand loyalty, and price consciousness

Consumer trends underlying values that drive consumers toward certain products and services and away from others

Consumerspace marketing environment where customers act as partners with companies to decide what the marketplace will offer

Consumption communities Web groups where members share views and product recommendations online

Consumption constellation a set of products and activities used by consumers to define, communicate, and perform social roles

Consumption situation includes a buyer, a seller, and a product or service—but also many other factors, such as the reason we want to make a purchase and how the physical environment makes us feel

Contamination when a place or object takes on sacred qualities because of its association with another sacred person or event

Contemporary Young Mainstream Female Achievers (CYMFA) modern women who assume multiple roles

Content marketing a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience

Context effects subtle cues in the environment that influence a person's decisions

Continuous innovation a modification of an existing product

Contrast stimuli that differ from others around them

Control group in an experiment, a neutral version of the manipulation to use as a baseline

Conventions norms that regulate how we conduct our everyday lives

Cooptation a cultural process by which the original meanings of a product or other symbol associated with a subculture are modified by members of mainstream culture

Core values common general values held by a culture

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) processes that encourage the organization to make a positive impact on the various stakeholders in its community including consumers, employees, and the environment

Corrective advertising messages an organization releases (voluntarily or not) that inform consumers of previous messages that were inaccurate or misleading

Cosmopolitanism a cultural value that emphasizes being open to the world and striving for diverse experiences

Cougars older women who date younger men

Counteractive construal exaggerating the negative aspects of behaviors that will impede the attainment of a goal as a strategy to avoid them and reach the goal

Counterarguing the tendency for consumers to think of reasons why they should not believe a message

Counterfeiting companies or individuals selling (for parallel construction between term and definition) fake versions of real products

Country of origin (COO) original country from which a product is produced; it can be an important piece of information in the decision-making process

Covariation assumed associations among events that may or may not actually influence one another

Craft product a creation valued because of the beauty with which it performs some function; this type of product tends to follow a formula that permits rapid production, and it is easier to understand than an art product

Creolization foreign influences are absorbed and integrated with local meanings

Crescive norms unspoken rules that govern social behavior

Crowdsourcing the growing practice of soliciting ideas for new products and even advertising campaigns from a user community

Cryptocurrency a system that relies upon encryption techniques rather than banks to regulate the generation of units of currency and verify the transfer of funds.

Cult products items that command fierce consumer loyalty and devotion

Cultural capital a set of distinctive and socially rare tastes and practices that admits a person into the realm of the upper class

Cultural formula a sequence of media events in which certain roles and props tend to occur consistently

Cultural gatekeepers individuals who are responsible for determining the types of messages and symbolism to which members of mass culture are exposed

Culture the values, ethics, rituals, traditions, material objects, and services produced or valued by the members of a society

Culture jamming strategies that attempt to disrupt or satirize messages from corporations

Culture of participation the driving philosophy behind social media that includes a belief in democracy; the ability to freely interact with other people, companies, and organizations; open access to venues that allow users to share content from simple comments to reviews, ratings, photos, stories, and more; and the power to build on the content of others from your own unique point of view

Culture production system (CPS) the set of individuals and organizations responsible for creating and marketing a cultural product

Curation a source such as a store or a celebrity selects a set of products to simplify shoppers' decisions

Custom a norm that controls basic behaviors, such as division of labor in a household

Customer journey a methodology where a marketer maps out in detail all the steps a customer takes while they interact with the company

Cyberbullying when one or more people post malicious comments online about someone else in a coordinated effort to harass him or her

Cybermediary intermediary that helps to filter and organize online market information so that consumers can identify and evaluate alternatives more efficiently

Cyberterrorism disruptive attacks on computer systems by malicious agents

Cyborg A person who lives a technologically enhanced existence, and who often possesses special abilities because s/he is linked to other parts of a larger system.

Dadvertising a new trend that depicts fathers as wise and benevolent in advertising

Data mining the search for patterns in very large databases

Database marketing tracking consumers' buying habits very closely, and then crafting products and messages tailored precisely to people's wants and needs based on this information

Decay structural changes in the brain produced by learning decrease over time

Decluttering a movement to simplify life by cleaning out excess products and other items

Deethnicization process whereby a product formerly associated with a specific ethnic group is detached from its roots and marketed to other subcultures

Default bias a tendency in decision making that makes it more likely for people to comply with a requirement than to make the effort not to comply

Deindividuation the process whereby individual identities get submerged within a group, reducing inhibitions against socially inappropriate behavior

Demographics the observable measurements of a population's characteristics, such as birthrate, age distribution, and income

Dependent variable in an experiment, a measurement of changes in a factor to determine if the manipulation of one or more other factors influences it

Desacralization the process that occurs when a sacred item or symbol is removed from its special place, or is duplicated in mass quantities, and becomes profane as a result

Design thinking a perspective on product development that emphasizes the importance of how the product makes sense in terms of how customers actually live their lives and use these things

Determinant attributes the attributes actually used to differentiate among choices

Differential threshold the ability of a sensory system to detect changes or differences among stimuli

Diffusion of innovations the process whereby a new product, service, or idea spreads through a population

Digital native young people who have grown up with computers and mobile technology; multitaskers with cell phones, music downloads, and instant messaging on the Internet; people who are comfortable communicating online and by text and IM rather than by voice

Digital self elements of self-expression that relate to a person's online identity

Digital virtual consumption (DVC) purchases of virtual goods for use in online games and social communities

Digital wallets electronic devices that allow an individual to make e-commerce transactions

DINKS acronym for double income, no kids; a consumer segment with a lot of disposable income

Disclaimers content at the end of a commercial message that supplies additional information the advertiser is required to provide

Discontinuous innovation a new product or service that radically changes the way we live

Discretionary income the money available to a household over and above that required for necessities

Dispreferred marker effect the tendency to couch negative product reviews in softer terms to avoid looking harsh and judgmental

DIY (Do It Yourself) The growing interest among consumers in creating or helping to create the products they use.

Dominance-submission hierarchy a "pecking order" within a culture that dictates which members are relatively higher in status than other members

Doppelgänger brand image a parody of a brand posted on a Web site that looks like the original but is in fact a critique of it

Dramaturgical perspective a view of consumer behavior that views people as actors who play different roles

Drive the desire to satisfy a biological need to reduce physiological arousal

Drive theory concept that focuses on biological needs that produce unpleasant states of arousal

Dyadic encounters relationships in which both parties must reach some agreement about the roles of each participant during a process of identity negotiation

Dynamically continuous innovation a significant change to an existing product

E-sports a growing activity that involves spectators who watch videogamers compete with one another

Early adopters people who are receptive to new products and adopt them relatively soon, though they are motivated more by social acceptance and being in style than by the desire to try risky new things

Echo Boomers people born between 1986 and 2002, also known as *Gen Y* and *Millennials*

Ecology the way members of a culture adapt to their physical habitat

Economics of information a perspective that regards advertising as an important source of consumer learning

Ego the system that mediates between the id and the superego

Ego-defensive function attitudes we form to protect ourselves either from external threats or internal feelings

Elaborated codes the ways of expressing and interpreting meanings that are more complex and depend on a more sophisticated worldview, which tend to be used by the middle and upper classes

Elaboration likelihood model (ELM) the approach that one of two routes to persuasion (central versus peripheral) will be followed, depending on the personal relevance of a message; the route taken determines the relative importance of the message contents versus other characteristics, such as source attractiveness

Elaborative rehearsal a cognitive process that allows information to move from short-term memory into long-term memory by thinking about the meaning of a stimulus and relating it to other information already in memory

Elimination-by-aspects rule a rule that selects the brand that is the best on the most important attribute, but that imposes specific cut-offs or "must haves"

Embarrassment an emotion driven by a concern for what others think about us

Embeds tiny figures inserted into magazine advertising by using high-speed photography or airbrushing; these hidden figures, usually of a sexual nature, supposedly exert strong but unconscious influences on innocent readers

Embodied cognition the perspective that our behaviors and observations of what we do and buy shape our thoughts rather than vice versa

Emic perspective an approach to studying (or marketing to) cultures that stresses the unique aspects of each culture

Emojis small digital icons that people use as shorthand to express ideas and emotions in social media

Emotional contagion the spread of emotion across people who receive affective messages

Emotional oracle effect a finding reported by researchers that people who trust their feelings are able to predict future events better than those who do not

Emotions intense affective reactions, such as happiness, anger, and fear

Empty self a shift toward a greater focus on the self as traditional points of reference such as family and cultural traditions recede in importance

Enclothed cognition as a demonstration of the more general phenomenon of embodied cognition, the symbolic meaning of clothing changes how people behave

Enculturation the process of learning the beliefs and behaviors endorsed by one's own culture

Endowed progress effect people are more motivated to attain a goal when they are provided with the illusion of a "head start" even though the actual effort required to reach the goal does not change

Endowment effect encouraging shoppers to touch a product encourages them to imagine they own it, and researchers know that people value things more highly if they own them

Envy a negative emotion associated with the desire to reduce the gap between oneself and someone who is superior on some dimension

Episodic memories memories that relate to personally relevant events; this tends to increase a person's motivation to retain these memories

Erogenous zones sexually arousing areas of the body

Ethnocentrism the belief that products from other places are inferior to local versions

Ethnography a research program that involves the observation of people in their natural habitats

Etic perspective an approach to studying (or marketing to) cultures that stresses commonalities across cultures

Evaluations positive or negative reactions to events and objects that are not accompanied by high levels of physiological arousal

Evaluative criteria the dimensions used by consumers to compare competing product alternatives

Evoked set those products already in memory plus those prominent in the retail environment that are actively considered during a consumer's choice process

Exchange a transaction in which two or more organizations or people give and receive something of value

Executive control center the part of the brain that we use to make important decisions

Expectancy disconfirmation model states that we form beliefs about product performance based on prior experience with the product or communications about the product that imply a certain level of quality: (1) if something performs the way we thought it would, we may not think much about it; (2) if it fails to live up to expectations, this may create negative feelings; (3) if performance exceeds our initial expectations, we are satisfied

Expectancy theory the perspective that behavior is largely "pulled" by expectations of achieving desirable outcomes, or positive incentives, rather than "pushed" from within

Experiential hierarchy of effects an attitude is initially formed on the basis of a raw emotional reaction

Experiment a technique that involves holding constant everything except one or more independent variables to determine the effect on one or more dependent variables

Expert power influence over others as a result of specialized knowledge about a subject

Exposure an initial stage of perception during which some sensations come within range of consumers' sensory receptors

Extended family traditional family structure in which several generations live together

Extended self the external objects we consider a part of our self-identity

Extinction the process whereby a learned connection between a stimulus and response is eroded so that the response is no longer reinforced

Eyeball economy the argument that in today's media environment marketers compete for consumers' attention rather than their money

Fad a short-lived fashion

Fake news hoaxes spread by hackers or other outsiders that lead many people to question the trustworthiness of even the most respected traditional and social media outlets

Family branding an application of stimulus generalization when a product capitalizes on the reputation of its manufacturer's name

Family financial officer (FFO) the individual in the family who is in charge of making financial decisions

Family identity the definition of a household by family members that it presents to members and to those outside the family unit

Family life cycle (FLC) a classification scheme that segments consumers in terms of changes in income and family composition and the changes in demands placed on this income

Fantasy a self-induced shift in consciousness, often focusing on some unattainable or improbable goal; sometimes fantasy is a way of compensating for a lack of external stimulation or for dissatisfaction with the actual self

Fashion the process of social diffusion by which a new style is adopted by some group(s) of consumers

Fashion system those people and organizations involved in creating symbolic meanings and transferring these meanings to cultural goods

Fatshionistas plus-sized consumers who are avidly interested in fashion and want more options from mainstream fashion marketers

Fattism a preference for thin people and/or discrimination against overweight people

Fear appeals an attempt to change attitudes or behavior through the use of threats or by highlighting negative consequences of noncompliance with the request

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) a popular explanation for the addictive nature of social networks

Feature creep the tendency of manufacturers to add layers of complexity to products that make them harder to understand and use

Feedback loop a strategy to help a person regulate his or her behavior by providing information about his or her actions in real time, and then offering a chance to change those actions

Female-to-male earnings ratio is 0.78, which means that on average a woman earns 78 cents for every dollar a man brings home

Fertility rate a rate determined by the number of births per year per 1,000 women of childbearing age

Figure-ground principle the *Gestalt* principle whereby one part of a stimulus configuration dominates a situation whereas other aspects recede into the background

Filter bubble a self-confirming situation when the broadcast media, websites. and social media platforms we consult serve up answers based upon what they "think" we want to see

Fishbein Model a widely-used perspective that measures several attributes to determine a person's overall attitude

Fixed-interval reinforcement after a specified time period has passed, the first response an organism makes elicits a reward

Fixed-ratio reinforcement reinforcement occurs only after a fixed number of responses

Flaming a violation of digital etiquette when a post is written in all capital letters

Flows exchanges of resources, information, or influence among members of a social network

Focus group a technique that involves discussion of a topic that a moderator leads

Follower brands brands that enter a market after another brand has already tested the waters

Food desert a geographic area where residents are unable to obtain adequate food and other products to maintain a healthy existence

Foot-in-the-door technique approach based on the observation that a consumer is more likely to comply with a request if he or she has first agreed to comply with a smaller request

Fortress brands brands that consumers closely link to rituals; this makes it unlikely they will be replaced

Framing a concept in behavioral economics that the way a problem is posed to consumers (especially in terms of gains or losses) influences the decision they make

Frequency marketing a marketing technique that reinforces regular purchasers by giving them prizes with values that increase along with the amount purchased

Frugalistas fashion-conscious consumers who pride themselves on achieving style on a limited budget

Frugality a personality trait that describes people who prioritize ways to save money

Functional theory of attitudes states that attitudes exist *because* they serve some function for the person; consumers who expect that they will need to deal with similar situations at a future time will be more likely to start to form an attitude in anticipation

Functionally illiterate a person whose reading skills are not adequate to carry out everyday tasks

Game platform an online interface that allows users to engage in games and other social activities with members of a community

Gamification the process of injecting gaming elements into tasks that might otherwise be boring or routine

Garbology a technique that involves sifting through trash to determine what residents actually consume

Gartner Hype Cycle a framework to help analysts chart the progress of a technological innovation

Gastrophysics the science of eating that considers how physics, chemistry, and psychology influence how we experience what we put in our mouths

Gemba Japanese term for the one true source of information

Gen X people born between 1965 and 1985

Gen Y people born between 1986 and 2002; also known as *Echo Boomers* and *Millennials*

Gen Z people born between the late 1990s to early 2000s

Gender benders people who don't endorse traditional sex roles

Gender binarism the classification of gender into two distinct, opposite and disconnected forms of masculine and feminine

Gender identity the elements of self-concept that reflect sex roles

Gender socialization elements of culture, including advertising, that provide guidelines regarding "appropriate" sex role behavior for members

Gender-bending product a traditionally sex-typed item adapted to the opposite gender

Genre in the context of social gaming, the method of play such as simulation, action, and role-playing

Geodemography techniques that combine consumer demographic information with geographic consumption patterns to permit precise targeting of consumers with specific characteristics

Gestalt meaning derived from the totality of a set of stimuli, rather than from any individual stimulus

Gestation the first stage of the gift-giving ritual where the giver procures an item to mark the event

Gift-giving ritual the events involved in the selection, presentation, acceptance, and interpretation of a gift

GIGO "Garbage in, garbage out"; a saying that reminds us any research results will be meaningless if the data that we collect are not valid

Glamping a new trend that combines camping with luxury travel

Global consumer culture a culture in which people around the world are united through their common devotion to brand name consumer goods, movie stars, celebrities, and leisure activities

Goal a consumer's desired end state

Golden triangle the portion of a Web site that a person's eyes naturally gravitate to first, which makes it more likely that search results located in that area will be seen

Green marketing a marketing strategy involving an emphasis on protecting the natural environment

Greenwashing when companies make false or exaggerated claims about how environmentally friendly their products are

Grooming rituals sequences of behaviors that aid in the transition from the private self to the public self or back again

Group dieting online forums devoted to encouraging people to go on crash diets

Guerrilla marketing unconventional marketing campaigns that place unusual messages in places where consumers don't expect to encounter advertising

Guilt an individual's unpleasant emotional state associated with possible objections to his or her actions, inaction, circumstances, or intentions

Gyges effect the anonymity of the Internet can cause otherwise moral people to experience a loss of inhibition and post things they would never say to a person in the real world

Habitual decision making choices made with little or no conscious effort

Habitus ways in which we classify experiences as a result of our socialization processes

Halal food and other products whose usage is permissible according to the laws of Islam

Halo effect a phenomenon that occurs when people react to other, similar stimuli in much the same way they respond to the original stimulus

Happiness a mental state of well-being characterized by positive emotions

Happiness economy an economy based upon well-being rather than material wealth

Haptic touch-related sensations

Haul videos a genre of YouTube video that consists of a shopper who describes in detail apparel he or she has just purchased

Heavy users a name companies use to identify their customers who consume their products in large volumes

Hedonic consumption the multisensory, fantasy, and emotional aspects of consumers' interactions with products

Heuristics the mental rules of thumb that lead to a speedy decision

Hierarchy of effects a fixed sequence of steps that occurs during attitude formation; this sequence varies depending on such factors as the consumer's level of involvement with the attitude object

Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow's) a model of motivation that identifies ascending levels of important needs

High-context culture group members tend to be close-knit and are likely to infer meanings that go beyond the spoken word

High-involvement hierarchy the sequence of attitude formation when a person approaches a product decision as a problem-solving process.

Highlighting effect the order in which consumers learn about brands determines the strength of association between these brands and their attributes

Hispanic people whose geographic and/or cultural origins are in Latin American countries

Hoarding unsystematic acquisition of objects (in contrast to collecting)

Hofstede Dimensions of National Culture a measurement system that scores a country in terms of its standing on six dimensions so that users can compare and contrast values

Home shopping party a selling format where a company representative makes a sales presentation to a group of people who gather at the home of a friend or acquaintance

Homeostasis a stable state of physiological arousal

Homogamy the tendency for individuals to marry others similar to themselves

Homophily the degree to which a pair of individuals is similar in terms of education, social status, and beliefs

Horizontal revolution a fundamental change in how consumers communicate via social media, whereby information doesn't just flow from big companies and governments; information flows *across* people as well

Host culture a new culture to which a person must acculturate

Household according to the U.S. Census Bureau, an occupied housing unit

Humor appeals a marketing message that relies upon humor to sell a product

Hybrid ad a marketing communication that explicitly references the context (e.g., TV show) in which it appears

Hybrid products items that feature characteristics from two different product domains

Hyperreality the becoming real of what is initially simulation or "hype"

Icon a sign that resembles the product in some way

Id the Freudian system oriented toward immediate gratification

Ideal of beauty a model, or exemplar, of appearance valued by a culture

Ideal self a person's conception of how he or she would like to be

Identification the process of forming an attitude to conform to another person's or group's expectations

Identity a component of self-concept

Identity negotiation the process that occurs when both participants in an encounter reach agreement about the role of each person

Identity theft the unauthorized use of personal information

Ideology the mental characteristics of a people and the way they relate to their environment and social groups

IFC (Incidental Food Consumption) people who simply eat the same things like, trust, and cooperate with one another more than those who don't

IKEA effect the tendency for consumers to like products more when they are involved in building or assembling them

Imbibing idiot bias the assumption that people who drink alcohol are less intelligent

Implementation intentions "if-then" plans that may dictate how much weight we give to different kinds of information (emotional or cognitive), a timetable to carry out a decision, or even how we will deal with disruptive influences that might interfere with our plans

Impression management our efforts to "manage" what others think of us by strategically choosing clothing and other cues that will put us in a good light

Impulse buying a process that occurs when the consumer experiences a sudden urge to purchase an item that he or she cannot resist

Incentive a reward offered to respondents who participate in a survey or other kind of research project

Incidental brand exposure motives that can lurk beneath the surface and cues in the environment that can activate a goal even when we don't know it

Incidental learning unintentional acquisition of knowledge

Income inequality the extent to which resources are distributed unevenly within a population

Independent variable in an experiment, a factor that is manipulated to determine if different levels result in a change in one or more dependent variables

Index a sign that is connected to a product because they share some property

Inertia the process whereby purchase decisions are made out of habit because the consumer lacks the motivation to consider alternatives

Influence impressions brand-specific mentions on social media posts

Influence network a two-way dialogue between participants in a social network and opinion leaders

Information cascades an online communication process where one piece of information triggers a sequence of interactions

Information power influence over others because of the possession of inside knowledge

Information search the process by which the consumer surveys his or her environment for appropriate data to make a reasonable decision

Innovation a product or style that is perceived as new by consumers

Innovators people who are always on the lookout for novel developments and will be the first to try a new offering

Instrumental conditioning also known as *operant conditioning*, occurs as the individual learns to perform behaviors that produce positive outcomes and avoid those that yield negative outcomes

Instrumental values goals endorsed because they are needed to achieve desired end states or terminal values

Intelligent agents software programs that learn from past user behavior to recommend new purchases

Interference one way that forgetting occurs; as additional information is learned, it displaces the previous information

Internalization deep-seated attitudes become part of our value system

Internet of Things the growing network of interconnected devices embedded in objects that speak to one another

Internet trolls people who experience a loss of inhibition and post things they would never say to a person in the real world

Interpretant the meaning derived from a sign or symbol

Interpretation the process whereby meanings are assigned to stimuli

Interpretivism as opposed to the dominant positivist perspective on consumer behavior, instead stresses the importance of symbolic, subjective experience and the idea that meaning is in the mind of the person rather than existing "out there" in the objective world

Interview a form of research that involves one-on-one questioning

Invidious distinction the use of status symbols to inspire envy in others through display of wealth or power

Involvement the motivation to process product-related information

Juggling lifestyle working mothers' attempts to compromise between conflicting cultural ideals of motherhood and professionalism

Just noticeable difference (JND) the minimum difference between two stimuli that can be detected by a perceiver

Kansei engineering a Japanese philosophy that translates customers' feelings into design elements

Kin-network system the rituals intended to maintain ties among family members, both immediate and extended

Knowledge bias the effectiveness of a source decreases because we question his or her knowledge about the topic

Knowledge function the process of forming an attitude to provide order, structure, or meaning

Knowledge structure organized system of concepts relating to brands, stores, and other concepts

Laddering a technique for uncovering consumers' associations between specific attributes and general values

Laggards consumers who are exceptionally slow to adopt innovations

Late adopters the majority of consumers who are moderately receptive to adopting innovations

Lateral cycling a process in which already-purchased objects are sold to others or exchanged for other items

Leaderboards an element of game design that provides information about all participants' progress in the game

Learning a relatively permanent change in a behavior caused by experience

Legitimate power influence over others due to a position conferred by a society or organization

Leisure class wealthy people for whom work is a taboo

Lexicographic rule a simple rule that selects the brand that is the best on the most important attribute

Licensing popular marketing strategy that pays for the right to link a product or service to the name of a well-known brand or designer

Lifelog tiny cameras that allow us to create a record of every event we experience throughout the day

Lifestyle a pattern of consumption that reflects a person's choices of how to spend his or her time and money

Lifestyle marketing perspective strategy based on the recognition that people sort themselves into groups on the basis of the things they like to do, how they like to spend their leisure time, and how they choose to spend their disposable income

Lifestyle segmentation typologies research projects that cluster a large group of consumers into a set of distinct lifestyle groups

List of Values (LOV) scale identifies consumer segments based on the values members endorse and relates each value to differences in consumption behaviors

Living off the grid an extreme aspect of the simplification movement that includes living without access to creature comforts like electricity and plumbing

Locational privacy the extent to which a person's activities and movements in the physical world are tracked by his or her devices such as smartphones

Locavore a lifestyle that emphasizes the purchase of locally produced meat and vegetables

LOHAS an acronym for "lifestyles of health and sustainability"; a consumer segment that worries about the environment, wants products to be produced in a sustainable way, and spends money to advance what they see as their personal development and potential

Long tail states that we no longer need to rely solely on big hits (such as blockbuster movies or best-selling books) to find profits; instead, companies can also make money if they sell small amounts of items that only a few people want—if they sell enough different items

Long-term memory (LTM) the system that allows us to retain information for a long period of time

Look-alike packaging package designs that mimic the shapes and colors of well-known brands

Looking-glass self the process of imagining the reaction of others toward oneself

Loss aversion the tendency for people to hate losing things more than they like getting things

Lovemark a passionate commitment to a brand

Low-context culture in contrast to high-context cultures that have strong oral traditions and that are more sensitive to nuance, low-context cultures are more literal

Low-involvement hierarchy of effects the process of attitude formation for products or services that carry little risk or self-identity

Lurkers passive members of an online community who do not contribute to interactions

M-PESA a mobile-phone-based money transfer service that is popular in parts of Africa

M2M (machine-to-machine communication) artificial intelligence (AI) applications that get better over time via machine learning

Machine learning A method of data analysis that allows a system to learn over time by analyzing patterns from prior experiences

Market access the extent to which a consumer has the ability to find and purchase goods and services

Market beliefs common assumptions about relationships between product quality and other factors such as price

Market maven a person who often serves as a source of information about marketplace activities

Market segmentation strategies targeting a brand only to specific groups of consumers who share well-defined and relevant characteristics

Market tests relatively small-scale product launches or simulations to determine if a larger rollout is likely to be successful

Marketplace sentiments consumers' feelings about companies or market practices

Martyrdom effect the tendency for people to donate more to a cause if they also have to sacrifice something or experience discomfort

Masculinism study devoted to the male image and the cultural meanings of masculinity

Mass class a term analysts use to describe the millions of global consumers who now enjoy a level of purchasing power that's sufficient to let them afford many high-quality products

Mass connectors highly influential members of social media networks

Mass customization the personalization of products and services for individual customers at a mass-production price

Material accumulation the instinct to earn more than we can possibly consume

Material parenting a style of raising children that involves giving and taking away of possessions to shape behavior

Materialism the importance consumers attach to worldly possessions

Maximizing solution the extensive cognitive decision strategies we use when we want to identify the best possible choice

Means–end chain model assumes that people link specific product attributes (indirectly) to terminal values such as freedom or safety

Media literacy a consumer's ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate information

Media multiplexity in a social media context, when flows of communication go in many directions at any point in time and often on multiple platforms

Media snacker consumers who visit media venues about 27 times per nonworking hour—the equivalent of more than 13 times during a standard half-hour TV show

Medical tourism a rapidly growing sector of the global economy that encourages consumers to travel to other countries for surgical procedures that might be unavailable, more dangerous, or more expensive where they live

Medication adherence the extent to which people fill and actually take prescribed medicines

Megachurches very large churches that serve between 2,000 and 20,000 congregants

Megacity a metropolitan area with a total population of more than 10 million people

Megaphone effect the ability of individual bloggers to share their opinions about products with large numbers of online followers

Membership reference group ordinary people whose consumption activities provide informational social influence

Meme theory a perspective that uses a medical metaphor to explain how an idea or product enters the consciousness of people over time, much like a virus

Memory a process of acquiring information and storing it over time so that it will be available when needed

Mental accounting principle that states that decisions are influenced by the way a problem is posed

Mental budgets consumers' preset expectations of how much they intend to spend on a shopping trip

Mere exposure phenomenon the tendency to like persons or things if we see them more often

Message involvement properties of the medium and message content that influence a person's degree of engagement with the message

Metaphor the use of an explicit comparison ("A" is "B") between a product and some other person, place, or thing

Milieu in the context of social gaming, the visual nature of the game such as science fiction, fantasy, horror, and retro

Millennials people born between 1986 and 2002; also known as *Echo Boomers* and *Gen Y*

Mindfulness a movement related to the practice of meditation that encourages followers to slow down, tune out distractions, and focus on what they feel at the moment

Minimal group paradigm the common finding that even when people are arbitrarily assigned to a group they tend to favor those who are placed in the same group

Minimalism practicing a simple lifestyle, with an emphasis on getting rid of things you don't need

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) a widely used instrument to identify personality traits

Mixed emotions affect with positive and negative components

MMORPGs (massive multiplayer online role-playing games) online role-playing games that typically involve thousands of players

Mobile shopping apps smartphone applications that retailers provide to guide shoppers in stores and malls

Mode in the context of social gaming, the way players experience the game world

Modeling imitating the behavior of others

Modified rebuy in the context of the buy-class framework, a task that requires a modest amount of information search and evaluation, often focused on identifying the appropriate vendor

Mood congruency the idea that our judgments tend to be shaped by our moods

Moods temporary positive or negative affective states accompanied by moderate levels of arousal

Morbid ink a tattoo that incorporates DNA of a loved one into the ink

More a custom with a strong moral overtone

Morning morality effect people are more likely to cheat, lie, or even commit fraud in the afternoon than in the morning.

Motivation the processes that drive us to behave as we do

Motivational research a qualitative research approach, based on psychoanalytic (Freudian) interpretations, with a heavy emphasis on unconscious motives for consumption

Multiattribute attitude models those models that assume a consumer's attitude (evaluation) of an attitude object depends on the beliefs he or she has about several or many attributes of the object; the use of a multiattribute model implies that an attitude toward a product or brand can be predicted by identifying these specific beliefs and combining them to derive a measure of the consumer's overall attitude

Multiple-intelligence theory a perspective that argues for other types of intelligence, such as athletic prowess or musical ability, beyond the traditional math and verbal skills psychologists use to measure IQ

Multitasking processing information from more than one medium at a time

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator a widely-used personality test based upon the work of Carl Jung

Myth a story containing symbolic elements that expresses the shared emotions and ideals of a culture

Narrative product information in the form of a story

Narrative transportation the result of a highly involving message where people become immersed in the storyline

National character the belief that a country has a distinctive set of behavior and personality characteristics

Native advertising a new advertising strategy that focuses on digital messages designed to blend into the editorial content of the publications in which they appear

Natural user interface a philosophy of computer design that incorporates habitual human movements

Near field communication (NFC) technology that allows devices near to one another (like a smartphone and an NFC terminal in a store) to establish radio communication

Need a basic biological motive

Negative reinforcement the process whereby the environment weakens responses to stimuli so that inappropriate behavior is avoided

Negative state relief the view that helping others is a way to resolve one's own negative moods

Negative word-of-mouth consumers passing on negative experiences relating to products or services to other potential customers to influence others' choices

Netnography a research technique that analyzes posts on social media platforms to determine consumers' thoughts and feelings about a product

Network effect each person who uses a product or service benefits as more people participate

Neuroendocrinological science the study of the potential role of hormonal influences on preferences for different kinds of products or people

Neuromarketing the use of brain-scanning instruments to identify changes in the brain when subjects are exposed to marketing stimuli

New task in the context of the buyclass framework, a task that requires a great degree of effort and information search

Nodes members of a social network connected to others via one or more shared relationships

Noncompensatory rules decision shortcuts a consumer makes when a product with a low standing on one attribute cannot make up for this position by being better on another attribute

Normative influence the process in which a reference group helps to set and enforce fundamental standards of conduct

Normcore a trend among young urbanites to forsake hipster styles like skinny jeans, wallet chains, and flannel shirts for bland, suburban attire

Norms the informal rules that govern what is right or wrong

Nostalgia a bittersweet emotion; the past is viewed with sadness and longing; many "classic" products appeal to consumers' memories of their younger days

Nouveau riches affluent consumers whose relatively recent acquisition of income rather than ancestry or breeding accounts for their enhanced social mobility

Nuclear family a contemporary living arrangement composed of a married couple and their children

Nudge a subtle change in a person's environment that results in a change in behavior

Object in semiotic terms, the product that is the focus of a message

Objectification when we attribute sacred qualities to mundane items

Observability in the context of diffusion of innovations, the extent to which a new product is something that is easy for consumers to see in use to motivate others to try it

Observational learning the process in which people learn by watching the actions of others and noting the reinforcements they receive for their behaviors

Occupational prestige a system in which we define people to a great extent by what they do for a living

One Percenter a label applied by the Occupy Wall Street Movement to people who earn the top 1 percent of income

Online community the collective participation of members who together build and maintain a digital social network

Online gated communities digital social networks that selectively allow access to people who possess criteria such as wealth or physical attractiveness

Open rates the percentage of people who open an email message from a marketer

Open-ended questions survey items that ask respondents to write their own responses to questions rather than choosing numbers on a scale

Opinion leader person who is knowledgeable about products and who frequently is able

to influence others' attitudes or behaviors with regard to a product category

Oppositional brand choice a tactic in a close relationship where a partner who feels he or she has less power deliberately chooses brands they know their partner doesn't like

Organizational buyers people who purchase goods and services on behalf of companies for use in the process of manufacturing, distribution, or resale

P2P commerce the notion of doing business with other consumers rather than with companies

P2P payment systems part of the sharing economy that allows consumers to give and receive payments to and from one another for products and services

Paid influencer programs initiatives that attempt to start online conversations about brands by hiring bloggers to write about them

Pantry check a form of research that involves the cataloging of the products in respondents' kitchens

Paradigm a widely accepted view or model of phenomena being studied; the perspective that regards people as rational information processors is currently the dominant paradigm, although this approach is now being challenged by a new wave of research that emphasizes the frequently subjective nature of consumer decision-making

Paradox of fashion a brand has cachet *because* only a select group of people own it; as more consumers outside of this inner circle start to adopt it, it is no longer exclusive and its original meaning is insert, the item is a victim of its own success

Paradox of low involvement when we *don't* care as much about a product, the way it's presented (e.g., who endorses it or the visuals that go with it) increases in importance

Parental yielding the process that occurs when a parental decision-maker is influenced by a child's product request

Parody display deliberately avoiding status symbols; to seek status by mocking it

Pastiche mixture of images

Perceived age how old a person feels as compared to his or her true chronological age

Perceived risk belief that a product has potentially negative consequences

Perception the process by which stimuli are selected, organized, and interpreted

Perceptual defense the tendency for consumers to avoid processing stimuli that are threatening to them

Perceptual selection process by which people attend to only a small portion of the stimuli to which they are exposed

Perceptual vigilance the tendency for consumers to be more aware of stimuli that relate to their current needs

Permission marketing popular strategy based on the idea that a marketer will be much more successful in persuading consumers who have agreed to let them try

Personality a person's unique psychological makeup, which consistently influences the way the person responds to his or her environment

Personality traits identifiable characteristics that define a person

personalization customizing a message or product for an individual consumer

Persuasion an active attempt to change attitudes

Persuasive design the use of "nudges" by an organization to modify behavior

Phantom Vibration Syndrome the tendency to habitually reach for your cell phone because you feel it vibrating, even if it is off or you are not even wearing it at the time

Phishing Internet scams where people receive fraudulent emails that ask them to supply account information

Pioneering brand the first brand to enter a market

Placebo effect the tendency for your brain to convince you that a fake treatment is the real thing

Pleasure principle the belief that behavior is guided by the desire to maximize pleasure and avoid pain

Plinking™ act of embedding a product or service link in a video

Plutonomy an economy that a small number of rich people control

Point-of-purchase (POP) stimuli the promotional materials that are deployed in stores or other outlets to influence consumers' decisions at the time products are purchased

Pop-up stores temporary locations that allow a company to test new brands without a huge financial commitment

Popular culture the music, movies, sports, books, celebrities, and other forms of entertainment consumed by the mass market

Positioning strategy an organization's use of elements in the marketing mix to influence the consumer's interpretation of a product's meaning vis-à-vis competitors

Positive reinforcement the process whereby rewards provided by the environment strengthen responses to stimuli and appropriate behavior is learned

Positivism a research perspective that relies on principles of the "scientific method" and assumes that a single reality exists; events in the world can be objectively measured; and the causes of behavior can be identified, manipulated, and predicted

Postpurchase evaluation the final stage of consumer decision making when we experience the product or service we selected

Power posing standing in a confident way in order to increase self-confidence

Power users opinion leaders in online networks

Prediction market an approach based on the idea that groups of people with knowledge about an industry are jointly better predictors of the future than are any individuals

Presentation the second stage of the gift-giving ritual when the gift is presented to the recipient

Prestige–exclusivity effect high prices create high demand

Pretailer an e-commerce site that provides exclusive styles by prodding manufacturers to produce runway pieces they wouldn't otherwise make to sell in stores

Prevention motivation a focus on responsibilities and duties as it prompts people to think about avoiding something negative in order to improve themselves

Primary data information that is collected by the researcher for a specific purpose

Priming properties of a stimulus that evoke a schema that leads us to compare the stimulus to other similar ones we encountered in the past

Principle of cognitive consistency the belief that consumers value harmony among their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and that they are motivated to maintain uniformity among these elements

Principle of Least Interest the person who is least committed to staying in a relationship has the most power

PRIZM (Potential Rating Index by Zip Market) clustering technique that classifies every zip code in the United States into one of 66 categories, ranging from the most affluent "Blue-Blood Estates" to the least well off "Public Assistance"

Problem recognition the process that occurs whenever the consumer sees a significant difference between his or her current state of affairs and some desired or ideal state; this recognition initiates the decision-making process

Product complementarity the view that products in different functional categories have symbolic meanings that are related to one another

Product curators influencers who select and recommend merchandise on behalf of manufacturers or stores

Product disposal choices people make regarding how to get rid of items once they no longer are of value to them

Product involvement a consumer's level of interest in a particular item

Product line extension new products based upon an established brand

Product placement the process of obtaining exposure for a product by arranging for it to be inserted into a movie, television show, or some other medium

Profane consumption the process of consuming objects and events that are ordinary or of the everyday world

Progressive learning model the perspective that people gradually learn a new culture as they increasingly come in contact with it; consumers assimilate into a new culture, mixing practices from their old and new environments to create a hybrid culture

Projective techniques a form of research that involves analyzing respondents' oral or written reactions to ambiguous images

Promotion motivation a focus on hopes and aspirations as it prompts people to improve themselves

Prospect theory a descriptive model of how people make choices

Provenance the origin of a product and a preference for "authentic" items

Psychographics the use of psychological, sociological, and anthropological factors to construct market segments

Psychological time a person's subjective evaluation of the passage of time, which may not correspond closely to the actual time elapsed

Psychophysics the science that focuses on how the physical environment is integrated into the consumer's subjective experience

Public self-consciousness a personality trait that makes a person very aware of how he or she appears to others

Punishment the learning that occurs when a response is followed by unpleasant events

Purchase momentum initial impulses to buy to satisfy our needs increase the likelihood that we will buy even more

Pure play businesses that only operate online

Queuing theory the mathematical study of waiting lines

Rational perspective the assumption that people calmly and carefully integrate as much information as possible with what they already know about a product, painstakingly weigh the pluses and minuses of each alternative, and arrive at a satisfactory decision

Reader-response theory an approach to understanding literature that focuses on the role of the reader in interpreting a story rather than just relying upon the author's version

Real-time bidding an electronic trading system that sells ad space on the Web pages people click on at the moment they visit them

Reality engineering the process whereby elements of popular culture are appropriated by marketers and become integrated into marketing strategies

Reality principle principle that the ego seeks ways that will be acceptable to society to gratify the id

Recall the process of retrieving information from memory; in advertising research, the extent to which consumers can remember a marketing message without being exposed to it during the study

Reciprocity norm a culturally learned obligation to return the gesture of a gift with one of equal value

Recognition in advertising research, the extent to which consumers say they are familiar with an ad the researcher shows them

Recommerce the practice of trading or reselling used possessions in the underground economy rather than purchasing new items from retailers

Red market the global market for body parts

Red sneakers effect we assume someone who makes unconventional choices is more powerful or competent

Reference group an actual or imaginary individual or group that has a significant effect on an individual's evaluations, aspirations, or behavior

Referent power influence over others because they are motivated to imitate or affiliate with a person or group

Reformulation the third stage of the gift-giving ritual when the relationship between the two parties is redefined following the exchange

Refutational arguments calling attention to a product's negative attributes as a persuasive strategy where a negative issue is raised and then dismissed; this approach can increase source credibility

Relationship marketing the strategic perspective that stresses the long-term, human side of buyer–seller interactions

Relative advantage in the context of diffusion of innovations, the extent to which a new product or service is an improvement over alternatives that are already available in the market

Repetition multiple exposures to a stimulus

Reporting bias the effectiveness of a source decreases because he or she has the required knowledge but we question his or her willingness to convey it accurately

Reputation economy a reward system based on recognition of one's expertise by others who read online product reviews

Resonance a literary device, frequently used in advertising, that uses a play on words (a double meaning) to communicate a product benefit

Response bias a form of contamination in survey research in which some factor, such as the desire to make a good impression on the experimenter, leads respondents to modify their true answers

Restricted codes the ways of expressing and interpreting meanings that focus on the content of objects, which tend to be used by the working class

Retail theming strategy where stores create imaginative environments that transport shoppers to fantasy worlds or provide other kinds of stimulation

Retail therapy the act of shopping in order to improve mood or mental state

Retrieval the process whereby desired information is recovered from long-term memory

Retro brand an updated version of a brand from a prior historical period

Reverse innovation the process whereby a product is created initially to meet the needs of developing nations and then is adapted elsewhere

Reward power a person or group with the means to provide positive reinforcement

Rich media elements of an online ad that employ movement to gain attention

Rites of passage sacred times marked by a change in social status

Ritual a set of multiple, symbolic behaviors that occur in a fixed sequence and that tend to be repeated periodically

Ritual artifacts items (consumer goods) used in the performance of rituals

Ritual script a predetermined sequence of effects that identifies how people should interact with products and services

Robot companions artificial intelligence platforms embedded in humanoid form that carry out simple tasks

Role theory the perspective that much of consumer behavior resembles actions in a play

Sacralization a process that occurs when ordinary objects, events, or people take on sacred meaning to a culture or to specific groups within a culture

Sacred consumption the process of consuming objects and events that are set apart

from normal life and treated with some degree of respect or awe

Sadvertising advertising that uses inspirational stories to generate an emotional response

Salience the prominence of a brand in memory

Sandwich Generation a description of middle-aged people who must care for both children and parents simultaneously

Satisficing solution a decision strategy that aims to yield an adequate solution (rather than the best solution) to reduce the costs of the decision-making process

Savings rate the proportion of income consumers put aside for future expenses

Schema an organized collection of beliefs and feelings represented in a cognitive category

Script a learned schema containing a sequence of events an individual expects to occur

Scrum a component of agile marketing that involves the use of small teams that run quick "sprints" and frequently change up their approach based upon rapid and honest feedback

Search engine optimization (SEO) the procedures companies use to design the content of websites and posts to maximize the likelihood that their content will show up when someone searches for a relevant term

Search engine software that examines the Web for matches to terms the user provides

Secondary data information about a topic that already exists and can be consulted by a researcher

Self-concept the beliefs a person holds about his or her own attributes and how he or she evaluates these qualities

Self-esteem the positivity of a person's self-concept

Self-fulfilling prophecy a person acts according to the way he or she believes others expect, thus confirming this assumption

Self-image congruence models research that suggests we choose products when their attributes match some aspect of the self

Self-monitors individuals who are very conscious of their behavior in social situations

Self-perception theory an alternative (to cognitive dissonance) explanation of dissonance effects; it assumes that people use observations of their own behavior to infer their attitudes toward some object

Self-regulation a person's deliberate efforts to change or maintain his actions over time

Selfie a picture a smartphone user takes of himself or herself

Semiotics a field of study that examines the correspondence between signs and symbols and the meaning or meanings they convey

Senior market consumers over the age of 50 who control a large amount of discretionary income

Sensation the immediate response of sensory receptors (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, fingers) to such basic stimuli as light, color, sound, odors, and textures

Sensory marketing marketing strategies that focus on the impact of sensations on our product experiences

Sensory memory the temporary storage of information received from the senses

Sensory overload a condition where consumers are exposed to far more information than they can process

Sensory threshold the point at which a stimulus is strong enough to make a conscious impact on a person's awareness

Sentiment analysis a process (sometimes also called *opinion mining*) that scours the social media universe to collect and analyze the words people use when they describe a specific product or company

Serial reproduction a technique to study how information changes as people transmit it to another where each person has to repeat the stimulus for the next person

Serial wardrobers shoppers who buy an outfit, wear it once, and return it

Service scripts the sequence of events a consumer expects to experience in a service situation

Sex appeals marketing communications for products that feature heavy doses of erotic suggestions that range from subtle hints to blatant displays of skin

Sexbot robot that combine the physical realism of silicon dolls with AI functionality that allows the user to maintain an actual relationship with the machine

Sex roles a culture's expectations about how members of the male or female gender should act, dress, or speak

Sex-typed products products that reflect stereotypical masculine or feminine attributes

Sex-typed traits characteristics that are stereotypically associated with one gender or the other

Sexting the growing trend of young people posting sexually suggestive photos of themselves online

Shaping the learning of a desired behavior over time by rewarding intermediate actions until the final result is obtained

Shared endorsements users who follow or rate a product or service may find that their endorsements show up on the advertiser's page

Sharing economy a business model where people rent or barter what they need rather than buying it

Shop-along a form of observational research where the researcher accompanies a respondent on a shopping trip to catalog what they buy and how they react to what they see in a store

Shopping orientation a consumer's general attitudes and motivations regarding the act of shopping

Short-term memory (STM) the mental system that allows us to retain information for a short period of time

Showrooming the process lamented by traditional retailers whereby consumers shop their stores to obtain product information and then purchase the chosen product online at a lower price

Shrinkage the loss of money or inventory from shoplifting or employee theft

Sign the sensory imagery that represents the intended meanings of the object

Similarity principle a view that consumers tend to group together objects that share similar physical characteristics

Simile comparing two objects that share a similar property

Simple additive rule select the option that has the largest number of positive attributes

Singularity movement followers believe that we are headed toward a new era where human intelligence will merge with computer intelligence to create a man/machine hybrid civilization

Situational involvement the extent to which a shopper is engaged with a store, website, or a location where people consume a product or service

Situational self-image the role a person plays in a specific social context that helps to determine how he or she feels

Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon a popular game that illustrates how closely linked people are in our online culture

Slacktivism token expressions of support for a cause that ironically may substitute for more concrete actions.

Sleeper effect the process whereby differences in attitude change between positive and negative sources seem to diminish over time

Snackwave followers deliberately binge on unhealthy foods as a way to rebel against the messages they get about healthy eating

Sneakerheads people who collect and often buy and sell rare sneakers

Snob effect lower prices reduce demand

Social capital organizational affiliations and experiences that provide access to desirable social networks

Social class the overall rank of people in a society; people who are grouped within the same social class are approximately equal in terms of their income, occupations, and lifestyles

Social comparison the basic human tendency to compare ourselves to others

Social default a shortcut to learning that involves the mimicry of others' behaviors

Social game a multi-player, competitive, goal-oriented activity with defined rules of engagement and online connectivity among a community of players

Social graphs social networks; relationships among members of online communities

Social identity theory a perspective that argues each of us has several "selves" that relate to groups; these linkages are so important that we think of ourselves not just as "I," but also as "we"

Social loafing the tendency for people not to devote as much to a task when their contribution is part of a larger group effort

Social marketing the promotion of causes and ideas (social products), such as energy conservation, charities, and population control

Social media the set of technologies that enable users to create content and share it with a large number of others

Social media addiction dependency on interaction with social networking platforms to the extent that signs of withdrawal appear if the person is unable to connect

Social mobility the movement of individuals from one social class to another

Social network a group of people who connect with one another online due to some shared interest or affiliation

Social power the capacity of one person to alter the actions or outcome of another

Social scoring both customers and service providers rate one another's performance

Social shopping an emerging form of e-commerce that allows an online shopper to simulate the experience of shopping in a brick-and-mortar store with other shoppers

Social stratification the process in a social system by which scarce and valuable resources are distributed unequally to status positions that become more or less permanently ranked in terms of the share of valuable resources each receives

Social structure the way members of a culture maintain an orderly social life

Sociometric methods the techniques for measuring group dynamics that involve tracing communication patterns in and among groups

Sock puppeting a company executive or other biased source poses as someone else to tout his organization in social media

Sound symbolism the process by which the way a word sounds influences our assumptions about what it describes and attributes such as size

Source attractiveness the dimensions of a communicator that increase his or her persuasiveness; these include expertise and attractiveness

Source credibility a communication source's perceived expertise, objectivity, or trustworthiness

Source derogation a possible downside to comparative advertising because the consumer may doubt the credibility of a biased presentation

Spacing effect the tendency to recall printed material to a greater extent when the advertiser repeats the target item periodically rather than presenting it over and over at the same time

Spectacles a marketing message that takes the form of a public performance

Spiritual-therapeutic model organizations that encourage behavioral changes such as weight loss that are loosely based on religious principles

Spokescharacters the use of animated characters or fictional mascots as product representatives

Spontaneous recovery ability of a stimulus to evoke a weakened response even years after the person initially perceived it

Spreading activation meanings in memory are activated indirectly; as a node is activated, other nodes linked to it are also activated so that meanings spread across the network

Stage of cognitive development the ability to comprehend concepts of increasing complexity as a person matures

State-dependent retrieval people are better able to access information if their internal state is the same at the time of recall as when they learned the information

Status crystallization the extent to which different indicators of a person's status (income, ethnicity, occupation) are consistent with one another

Status hierarchy a ranking of social desirability in terms of consumers' access to resources such as money, education, and luxury goods

Status signaling the extent to which a brand employs prominent signs of status such as a well-known logo on merchandise

Status symbols products whose primary function is to communicate one's social standing to others

Stimulus discrimination the process that occurs when behaviors caused by two stimuli are different, as when consumers learn to differentiate a brand from its competitors

Stimulus generalization the process that happens when the behavior caused by a reaction to one stimulus occurs in the presence of other, similar stimuli

Storage stage the stage of memory processing when we integrate incoming information with existing data and store it until needed

Store image a store's "personality," composed of such attributes as location, merchandise suitability, and the knowledge and congeniality of the sales staff

Straight rebuy in the context of the buyclass framework, the type of buying decision that is virtually automatic and requires little deliberation

Street art paintings, murals, and other pieces in public places

Strength of weak ties the referral process that provides access to members of new groups due to a slight connection to someone in that group

Subculture a group whose members share beliefs and common experiences that set them apart from other members of a culture

Subjective norm (SN) an additional component to the multiattribute attitude model that accounts for the effects of what we believe other people think we should do

Subliminal perception the processing of stimuli presented below the level of the consumer's awareness

Subscription boxes a new business model that delivers an assortment of products on a regular basis to consumers who sign up

Sunk-cost fallacy the belief that if we pay more for something we should not waste it

Superego the system that internalizes society's rules and that works to prevent the id from seeking selfish gratification

Superfoods food products that maximize nutritional benefit while minimizing caloric intake

Surrogate consumer a professional who is retained to evaluate or make purchases on behalf of a consumer

Survey a data collection tool that is administered to a sample of respondents in order to summarize their thoughts and feelings about a research topic

Sustainability an emphasis on creating and maintaining the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations

Swishing people organize parties to exchange clothing or other personal possessions with others

Symbol a sign that is related to a product through either conventional or agreed-on associations

Symbolic interactionism a sociological approach stressing that relationships with other people play a large part in forming the self; people live in a symbolic environment, and the meaning attached to any situation or object is determined by a person's interpretation of these symbols

Symbolic self-completion theory the perspective that people who have an incomplete self-definition in some context will compensate by acquiring symbols associated with a desired social identity

Synchronous communications interactions that occur in real time

Synoptic ideal a model of spousal decision-making in which the husband and wife take a common view and act as joint decision-makers, assigning each other well-defined roles and making mutually beneficial decisions to maximize the couple's joint utility

Taste culture a group of consumers who share aesthetic and intellectual preferences

Technology acceptance model (TAM) a widely used approach to predicting whether people will adopt a new form of technology or information system

Terminal values end states desired by members of a culture

The Google Effect the tendency for people to rely too heavily on the ability to readily access content online and, as a result, be less likely to remember certain details

Theory of cognitive dissonance theory based on the premise that a state of tension is created when beliefs or behaviors conflict with one another; people are motivated to reduce this inconsistency (or dissonance) and thus eliminate unpleasant tension

Theory of reasoned action an updated version of the Fishbein multiattribute attitude theory that considers factors such as social pressure and A_{act} (the attitude toward the act of buying a product), rather than simply attitudes toward the product itself

Thinspiration communities that encourage crash dieting, bingeing, vomiting, and other actions to lose a lot of weight

Third gender movement the push to expand the definition of gender beyond the traditional categories of male and female

Tie strength the nature and potency of the bond between members of a social network

Time poverty a feeling of having less time available than is required to meet the demands of everyday living

Timestyle an individual's priorities regarding how he or she spends time as influenced by personal and cultural factors

Tiny House Movement followers downscale their lives by moving into very small homes

Tipping point moment of critical mass

Torn self a condition where immigrants struggle to reconcile their native identities with their new cultures

Total quality management (TQM) management and engineering procedures aimed at reducing errors and increasing quality; based on Japanese practices

Trade dress color combinations that become strongly associated with a corporation

Transformative consumer research (TCR) promotes research projects that include the goal of helping people or bringing about social change

Trialability in the context of diffusion of innovations, the extent to which a new product or service can be sampled prior to adoption

Trickle-across effect fashions diffuse horizontally among members of the same social group

Trickle-down theory the perspective that fashions spread as the result of status symbols associated with the upper classes "trickling down" to other social classes as these consumers try to emulate those with greater status

Trickle-up effect fashions originate in a lower-class group and diffuse into the mass market

Triple bottom-line orientation business strategies that strive to maximize financial, social, and environmental return

Trophy wives attractive spouses that rich men deploy as status symbols

Two-factor theory the perspective that two separate psychological processes are operating when a person is repeatedly exposed to an ad: repetition increases familiarity and thus reduces uncertainty about the product, but over time boredom increases with each exposure, and at some point the amount of boredom incurred begins to exceed the amount of uncertainty reduced, resulting in wear-out

Two-step flow model of influence proposes that a small group of *influencers* disseminate information because they can modify the opinions of a large number of other people

Unboxing videos a genre of YouTube video that features consumers who show how to unpack a new gadget it, assemble it, or use it

Unconditioned stimulus (UCS) a stimulus that is naturally capable of causing a response

Underdog brand biography a communications approach that includes details about a brand's humble origins and how it defied the odds to succeed

Underground economy secondary markets (such as flea markets) where transactions are not officially recorded

Unipolar emotions emotional reactions that are either wholly positive or wholly negative

Unplanned buying when a shopper buys merchandise she did not intend to purchase, often because she recognizes a new need while in the store

Upsell encouraging customers to buy additional items after they have made a purchase

User-generated content consumers voice their opinions about products, brands, and companies on blogs, podcasts, and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and film their own commercials that they post on sites such as YouTube

Utilitarian function states that we develop some attitudes toward products simply because they provide pleasure or pain

Value a belief that some condition is preferable to its opposite

Value system a culture's ranking of the relative importance of values

Value-expressive function states each individual develops attitudes toward products because of what they say about him or her as a person

Values and Lifestyles System (VALS2™) a psychographic segmentation system

Vanity sizing deliberately assigning smaller sizes to garments

Variable-interval reinforcement the time that must pass before an organism's response is reinforced varies based on an average number of responses

Variable-ratio reinforcement method in which you get reinforced after a certain number of responses, but you don't know how many responses are required

Variety-seeking the desire to choose new alternatives over more familiar ones

Viral marketing the strategy of getting customers to sell a product on behalf of the company that creates it

Virtual goods digital items that people buy and sell online

Virtual makeover software that allows consumers to manipulate aspects of their appearance in a photograph they post online

Virtual reality (VR) provides a totally immersive experience that transports the user

into an entirely separate three-dimensional environment

Voluntarily childless women of childbearing age who consciously decide not to have children

Von Restorff effect techniques like distinctive packaging that increase the novelty of a stimulus and also improve recall

Want the particular form of consumption chosen to satisfy a need

Warming process of transforming new objects and places into those that feel cozy, hospitable, and authentic

Wearable computing devices that integrate digital interactions with the physical body

Web 2.0 the current version of the Internet as a social, interactive medium from its original roots as a form of one-way transmission from producers to consumers

Web scraping A research technique that involves the use of software to collect and summarize online social media posts.

Weber's Law the principle that the stronger the initial stimulus, the greater its change must be for it to be noticed

Weighted additive rule select the option that has the largest number of positive attributes, but taking into account the relative importance of the attributes by weighting each one in terms of its relative importance to the decision maker

Wisdom of crowds a perspective that argues that, under the right circumstances, groups are smarter than the smartest people in them; implies that large numbers of consumers can predict successful products

Word-of-mouth (WOM) product information transmitted by individual consumers on an informal basis

Word–phrase dictionary in sentiment analysis, a library that codes data so that the program can scan the text to identify whether the words in the dictionary appear

Worldview a perspective on social norms and behaviors that tends to differ among social classes

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